CHINA: PRESSURES THAT THREATEN THE WORLD

CANADA'S WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE SEPTEMBER 4, 1995 $3.50

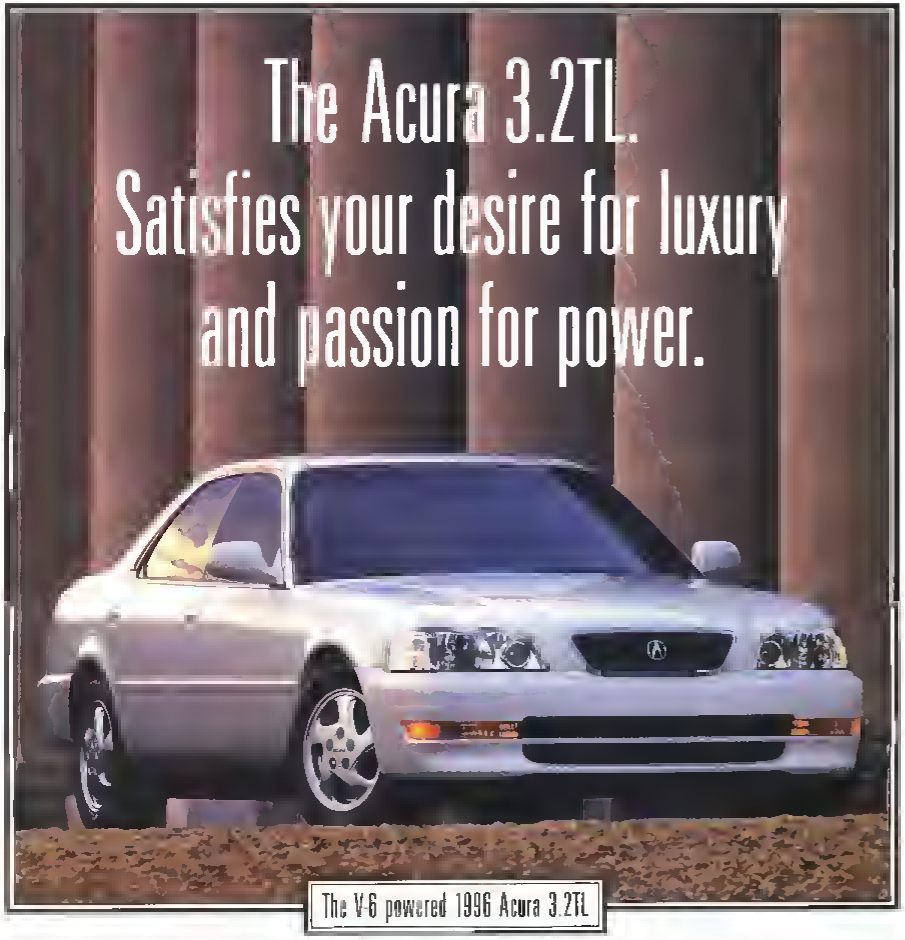
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Telling Fortunes

Montreal's JoJo Savard leads a cast of money-spinning psychics on late-night TV

36
7 78624 70001 8



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SEPTEMBER 4 1995 VOL 108 NO 36

CONTENTS

2 EDITORIAL

4 LETTERS

6 OPENING NOTES/PASSAGES

9 COLUMN: DIANE FRANCIS

10 CANADA
A Newfoundland referendum on school reform pits the churches against the state, national native leader Ovide Mercredi intervenes as a militant group confronts the RCMP in central British Columbia.

18 WORLD
China draws fire over its human rights record as it prepares to host a huge UN-sponsored conference on women's rights, why some terrorist groups are turning their fire on tourists

24 SPECIAL REPORT

30 BUSINESS
Canada's biotechnology firms become targets as merger mania strikes the giant drug companies, a Canadian-owned mine in Guyana confronted a cyanide leak that contaminated a major river

35 THE BOTTOM LINE: DEIRDRE McMURDY

37 THE NATION'S BUSINESS: PETER C. NEWMAN

38 COVER

48 SPORTS WATCH: TRENT FRAYNE

50 PEOPLE

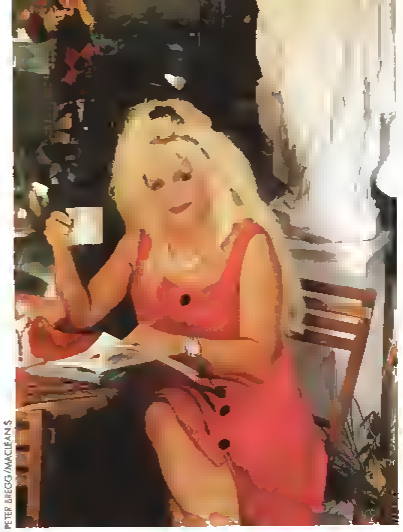
52 FILMS
In a summer dominated by broadsword epics and cyberspace capers, some of the best movies are small independent releases. One is *The Brothers McMullen*, which focuses on commitment phobia.

53 BOOKS
A new biography portrays 19th-century English novelist George Eliot as a woman tormented by depression, self-doubt and the conflicting tugs of her independent spirit and social conventions.

56 FOTHERINGHAM

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COVER PHOTO BY PETER BREGG/MACLEAN'S



PETER BREGG/MACLEAN'S

Telling fortunes

38 Montreal's JoJo Savard is a celebrity of a distinctly 1990s variety—the leading Canadian psychic in North America's booming infomercial scene. Her face has launched millions of calls on late-night TV from people seeking celestial guidance at the rate of $4.99 a minute. It is a big, mysterious business.

China: facing the challenge

24 With 1.2 billion potential consumers, China is an irresistible target for many foreign investors. But China's economic future depends heavily on its leaders' ability to cope with a breathtaking array of environmental crises.



THOMAS HOWARD/CEN



GREG GALE

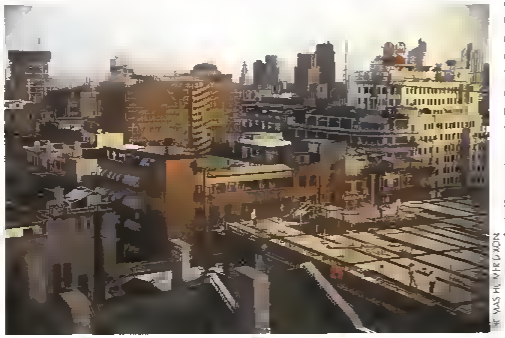
He said, they said

10 Canada's premiers gathered in St. John's, Nfld., last week to resolve issues such as social policy, but the Quebec issue dominated the talks. Premier Jacques Parizeau split with the other premiers after they insisted that a deal to lessen restrictions on interprovincial trade would not apply to an independent Quebec.



A Cautionary Tale

That Li Peng, he sure could use a good PR guy. Perhaps some of those Ottawa lobbyists who did so well on airport and plane and real estate deals would like to help him out at their usual, modest $9,000 to $12,000-a-month retainers. Here he is, just trying to run China as Prime Minister, while the authorities assure the world that the 91 year-old maximum leader, Deng Xiaoping, who has not shown his face in public for more than a year is hale and hearty. And Li has been making some really bad moves. In the past 18 months he has rounded up a roomful of prominent dissidents, notably including the American citizen, Harry Wu, whom the authorities finally let go last week after intense pressure from Washington. In August, 16 people were executed and another 10 have been sentenced to death for crimes including drug dealing. Li also has defied world opinion by conducting underground nuclear tests this month. And this week, he is smack in the middle of a huge row with a potent force in the world, 50,000 delegates and observers who are coming to Beijing for the largest international women's conference ever staged.



Shanghai construction: development, not democracy

All of that comes at a time when capitalist roaders of the world many of them prominent Canadians, are uniting to make deals with China. Bank of Montreal chairman Matthew Barrett, in fact, was in China last week with a senior bank delegation, giving face to his assiduous efforts to do business in the Middle Kingdom. What the bankers and business people are learning, of course, is that it is not as simple as it appeared. China offers magical opportunities for commerce, but it is far from clear that the nation of 1.2 billion can achieve and maintain stability.

That is the sobering message of an insightful essay in the current issue by Thomas Homer-Dixon, a political scientist who recently spent three weeks travelling in China—not only through the burgeoning cities of Nanjing, Zhengzhou, Shanghai and Beijing but, more tellingly, through the countryside, where 70 per cent of the people live and where foreigners rarely visit. His is a cautionary tale about a nation more committed to development than democracy, with enormous environmental problems.

True, construction cranes, skyscrapers and luxury apartments dominate the skylines of several cities. Billboards sell whiskey, blue jeans and cars. There are Audis and Volvos and Mercedeses on the highways. In the countryside, small farmers control their land and small business thrives. Still, the farther he travelled into the hinterland, the more Homer-Dixon saw the poverty and environmental degradation that threatens the nation. He describes dirt streets strewn with garbage, houses made of mud and hillsides stripped bare of trees for fuel. Back in Tiananmen Square, Homer-Dixon saw the five-storey digital clock that is counting down the seconds until July 1, 1997, when the British will turn Hong Kong over to China. The question lingering in the polluted air is one that could be answered by then: is China the country of tomorrow, or is it a ticking time bomb?

Robert Lewis

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90

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Publisher Brian Segal

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2. The majority of Canadians recognize the importance of breakfast and eat a well-balanced meal. T/F

FALSE Recent studies indicate that 53% of Canadians skip breakfast entirely, while only 8% eat a complete, well-balanced meal. Health professionals recommend that 25% of the day's total energy (caloric intake) be consumed at breakfast!

3. Orange juice and iron-enriched whole grain cereals with milk nutritionally enhance one another at the breakfast table. T/F

TRUE Pure orange juice and iron-enriched cereal are a winning combination. The Vitamin C in pure orange juice enhances the body's absorption of iron from the cereal. As well, three of the four major food groups recommended in Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating are represented in this nutritious breakfast: vegetables/fruit, milk, and grain products.

4. The body stores most essential vitamins and nutrients until we require them. T/F

FALSE Several key vitamins cannot be stored, but are required daily. Vitamin C falls into this category because it is water soluble. The excess not immediately required by the body is expelled though normal functions. A 175 mL/6 oz. serving of pure orange juice provides 90% of the Recommended Daily Intake (RDI) for Vitamin C.

5. The only nutritional benefit derived from pure orange juice is Vitamin C. T/F

FALSE An excellent source of Vitamin C, a 175 mL/6 oz. serving of pure orange juice is also a good source of folacin (26% RDI), a source of potassium (320 mg) and is sodium-free (0.0 mg).

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LETTERS

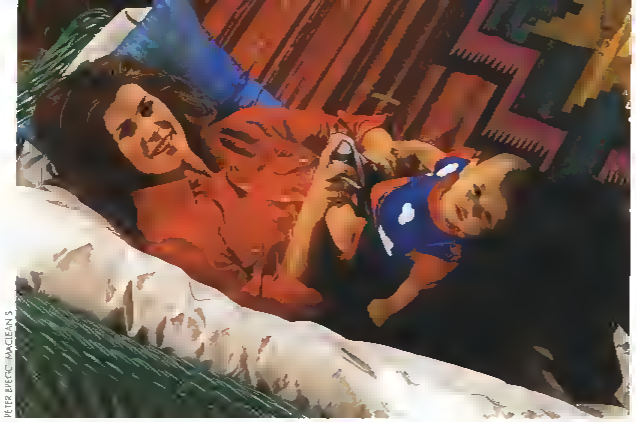
Adoption process

Congratulations for "Bringing home baby" (Cover, Aug. 21). I felt unexpected tears when I read the reaction of Sonja Smits to receiving her son. "You realize how perfect he is, and you say, 'My God, how did we get so lucky?' " I felt the same way when we met our five adopted children for the first time at the airport in Cali, Colombia, in 1989. I felt it even more strongly when I escorted a three-year-old indigenous girl from Guatemala to her adoptive parents in Canada. It led me to write an article on perfection—the inner perfection I had sought in the monastery I now see as being outside us—in the perfect child waiting to be adopted.

Kenneth Plotnik,
Stratford, Ont.

It seems to me that there are a lot of people out there who desperately want babies. They will go overseas to adopt while we kill our own unborn children here in Canada. Doesn't anyone see how horribly wrong that is?

Iain Campbell,
Newmarket, Ont. ▣



PETER DEFEO/MACLEAN'S

Smits with her son, Lion: the perfect child waiting to be adopted

'By any standard'

I was very disappointed to read the piece "Manhattan, N.S." (The Arts, Aug. 14) about some New Yorkers residing in Nova Scotia. The subtext of the article is "we must be OK—look at the Americans who deign to live amongst us!" This is a wonderful country by any standard, and we don't need to have our existence validated by anybody.

Graydon Sheppard,
Hamilton

Electric storm

It is not surprising that Colin Hunt of the Canadian Nuclear Association thought your accurate article about his industry ("A troubled nuclear family," Cover, Aug. 7) "left much to be desired." He clearly prefers self-serving nonsense, like his letter of Aug. 21 ("Nuclear reaction"). In it, he denies that Ontario Hydro's 14.4-billion Darlington nuclear station "was originally budgeted at $3.5 billion," but the higher estimate he provides is from years after the original budget. Hunt then goes on to claim that Darlington is "the cheapest (electricity) source in Ontario, after Niagara Falls," despite its enormous mortgage, with a "cash cost of 1.1 cents per kilowatt-hour." But Hunt's so-called cash cost conveniently omits Darlington's enormous capital costs. Those costs alone, at between six and seven cents per kilowatt-hour, are far higher than the total costs—capital and operating—of more efficient alternatives, like combined-cycle gas turbines. But then, if nuclear stations were cost-effective, why would the 50-year-old nuclear industry still need to be propped up by federal taxpayers?

Norman Rubin,
Director, Nuclear research,
Energy Probe,
Toronto ▣

Summer agenda

With a cast of hundreds of subcommittees, Charles Gordon's bit of summer whimsy ("Facing up to the real issues of summer," Column, Aug. 21) seemed like a gentle spoof on how our country is managed. The entire column was a welcome relief from the daily bad news.

Pat Anderson,
Victoria

Working women

I read the article "Women at work: room to improve" (Business, Aug. 21) with interest. I was disappointed, but not surprised, to see nursing and teaching referred to as "female jobs" and not careers—occupations rather than professions. I hope that soon these fields will not be demeaned subtly because they are "female dominated," and women who choose them will not be seen as lesser mortals because they do.

Katharyn A. May,
Professor and director, University of British Columbia School of Nursing,
Vancouver ▣

A fair price

Your article "Feuding over a fair" (Canada, Aug. 28) may have given readers the mistaken impression that Ottawa-area residents are eagerly awaiting the arrival of a costly world's fair. Ottawa-Carleton Regional Council has never even seen the Expo 2005 bid, let alone endorsed it or budgeted for it. While residents share the Expo corporation's justifiable pride in our region, most don't share its enthusiasm for spending tax dollars for this purpose.

Alex Munter,
Ottawa-Carleton regional councillor,
Kanata, Ont.

Hiring practices

The working people of this country have taken a pounding during the recession and the more recent "jobless recovery" ("In thick and thin," The Bottom Line, Aug. 7). The economic uncertainty that the business sector blames for its continuing reluctance to include workers in the return to profitability is, in fact, in large measure due to this reluctance. Consumers are not spending because their wages are falling behind inflation, because real interest rates are sky high and because they are afraid for their jobs. If business wants the economy to improve, it is going to have to start hiring—into career-type jobs with a long-term future.

Gerald M. Macdonald,
Grande Prairie, Alta.

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I'm strolling down the Champs Élysées,
when I look up and there's the Arc De Triomphe.
Well, I take a few steps towards it and
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Finally I got across the street,
but it made me wonder,
hey what would happen if I got hurt here?

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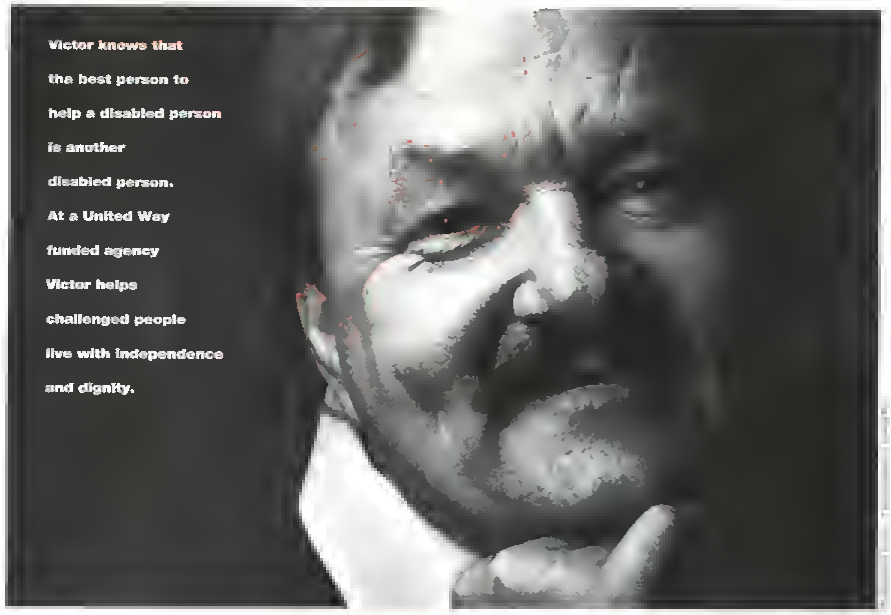
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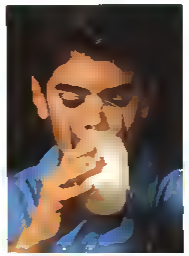
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Healthy Bites

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Lactose intolerance is quite rare in Canadian children

Parents who withdraw milk from their children's diet, fearing lactose intolerance, may be doing their children a serious disservice. A recent study showed that primary school-aged children whose parents (wrongly) perceived them to be food intolerant and restricted their diet were significantly shorter than food-tolerant children. Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating recommends children, aged 2-9, eat 2-3 servings of milk products each day and children, 10-16, consume 3-4.

Zits!

Acne used to be a problem most people outgrew, however, dermatologists have remarked that adults are suffering "breakouts" in growing numbers.

What's to blame? The tendency has always been to point the finger at certain foods. Chocolate, french fries, colas, peanuts, milk and iodine-containing foods such as shellfish have all been accused. Yet dermatologists assert that food plays no role in either adult or teenage acne. Rather they cite genetic predisposition, hormonal imbalance, the increased stresses of modern life and pollution.

No Pain, No Gain?

No Way!

When it comes to levels of healthy physical activity for the average person, the "no pain, no gain" mind-set is going the way of the dodo. Why? Because it doesn't work, long-term. Research shows that people are more likely to adopt activity patterns if they are "enjoyable" and "practical".

From the Dairy Bureau of Canada

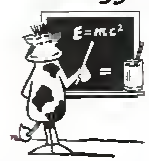
Activity Lowers Death Rate Nearly 50%

How important is being physically active? In the United States, an estimated 12% of total deaths are attributable to lack of regular activity. In a recent 5-year study of almost 10,000 men conducted by the Cooper Institute for Aerobics Research, those who went from being "unfit" to at least "moderately fit" reduced their risk of dying prematurely by nearly 50%. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American College of Sports Medicine recommend that adults accumulate at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity—like brisk walking, gardening or dancing - every day.

GRAPEFRUIT Burns Off Fat?

Have you heard that eating certain foods like grapefruit can speed up weight loss? Sorry, it's a myth. No one food has the power to burn off fat - try exercise!

An udder source of energy



OPENING NOTES

New garb for the Island icon

The face of Anne Shirley, the beloved 11-year-old heroine of the 1908 children's classic *Anne of Green Gables*, appears on everything from licence plates to coffee mugs in her home province of Prince Edward Island. The image is so sweet and wholesome that some Islanders were bound to experience a sugar overdose. And so in mid-July, The Island Store, located in Charlottetown's waterfront area, began selling T-shirts bearing the backside view of a full-figured red-haired woman—complete with Anne's trademark pigtails and yellow sun hat—casually dangling the top of her bikini. The tantalizing T-shirt is the product of store owner Anne Putnam, who bought the silkscreen rights to a watercolor by local artist Dale McNevin. "It's meant to be a spoof," says Putnam about the T-shirt, which does not actually bear Anne's name. "People take the icon of Anne too seriously." The store has sold so many of the $17.95 T-shirts that Putnam has added two new colors, ivory and ash, to the original white background, and sweatshirts and mock turtlenecks that sell for $25.95. Sacrilege? Not according to Putnam's customers. Says Anne Taylor Murray of Basin Head, P.E.I.: "Anne being a wanton free spirit and all, this is exactly the kind of thing she would do."

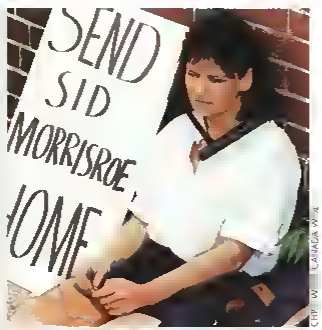


The controversial T-shirt: adapting Anne's wholesomeness

An Internet appeal

A convicted murderer who is serving a life sentence at a minimum-security prison in Mission, B.C., Sidney Morrisroe has always maintained he is innocent. Now, his family and supporters are providing him with what may be the digital equivalent of an old-fashioned hacksaw in a cake—a home page on the Internet's World Wide Web. The 61-year-old former plumbing contractor was convicted in 1984 for helping to arrange the killing of Vancouver nightclub owner Joseph Phillipone, but has consistently claimed that he was framed by police—a claim bolstered by the fact that a key witness at his trial has since recanted her evidence. Visitors to the Web site can download more than 250 pages of documents, including lengthy extracts from Morrisroe's 1984 trial and more recent affidavits from witnesses that cast doubt on the original verdict. Morrisroe's supporters say they hope the site (at *http://www.wimsey.com/~jmack/fverdict.html*) will put pressure on Justice Minister Allan Rock to reopen the case.

According to Internet experts, Morrisroe is the first Canadian convict to plead his case in cyberspace. Earlier this year, Girvies Davis, 37, a death-row inmate in Illinois, put his plea for clemency on the Internet. He was executed as scheduled. In the Morrisroe case, a Vancouver Internet service provider helped the family establish its home page at no cost after they became frustrated by the slow response from Rock's department. In July, Morrisroe's daughter Tami chained herself outside Rock's constituency office in Toronto to protest the delays. Says Tami: "The case should obtain a measure of heightened accountability by the very fact that it is now accessible worldwide."



Tami Morrisroe, protesting delays



Shopping for Windows 95 delays

Keeping the Windows closed

At midnight on Aug. 24, more than 500 customers lined up outside Montreal's Crazy Irving Superstore, an electronics retailer, to purchase copies of Microsoft Corp.'s much-hyped Windows 95. But to take advantage of the new operating system, anxious computer buffs in Quebec will need to speak English. A French-language version of the product will not go on sale until Nov. 1—the result of a marketing decision that Marie-Josee Gagnon, an aide to Premier Jacques Parizeau, described as "unacceptable." She added: "We want to be there for the revolution—and we want to be able to do it in our own language." A Microsoft spokesman, however, insisted that economics, not language policy, is responsible for the late release. Shoppers in France could buy Windows 95 in French last week, but the price there was about 20 per cent higher than the $109 to $125 charged by Canadian outlets. By contrast, the French version that will be sold in Quebec will cost the same as the English version. "We were worried about a grey market developing with Windows 95 being exported to France," explained Microsoft Canada official Matthew Price. Two months from now, Microsoft expects software pirates will find the window of opportunity has closed.

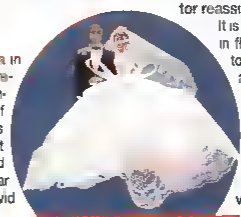
POP MOVIES

Top movies in Canada, ranked according to box-office receipts during the seven days that ended on Aug. 24 (in brackets, numbers of screens/weeks showing)

1. **Mortal Kombat** (137/1) ... $2,569,820
2. **Dangerous Minds** (103/2) ... $1,696,880
3. **Waterworld** (136/4) ... $806,520
4. **A Walk in the Clouds** (80/2) ... $613,330
5. **The Net** (103/4) ... $587,130
6. **Something to Talk About** (85/3) ... $575,150
7. **Apollo 13** (91/8) ... $447,950
8. **The Baby-Sitters Club** (91/1) ... $447,470
9. **Bebe** (89/3) ... $439,570
10. **Virtuosity** (68/3) ... $364,470

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A politically correct love story



WORD FOR WORD

The University of British Columbia in Vancouver has been rocked in recent months by an inquiry that concluded that there was a pattern of gender and racial bias in the school's political science department. In that chilly atmosphere, even a whirlwind romance must be—and must appear to be—aboveboard. So before David Elkins, 54, acting head of the university's political science department, and Nicole Parton, 49, a reporter who has covered the bias controversy for *The Vancouver Sun*, got married last week, they sent open letters to their colleagues. Excerpts:

Elkins:

By the time most of you read this statement, we will be enjoying a brief honeymoon. I want to outline how this occurred so that everyone can see that any potential conflict of interest has been removed. Nicole interviewed me briefly in my office July 13 for a story published the next day. We had never met under any circumstances before then, although she had interviewed me on the telephone. About two weeks later, Nicole purchased a copy of my latest book, *Beyond Sovereignty*. After reading a large part of it, she decided that her very favorable view of the book, and through it of me, might constitute a bias. She declared a conflict and requested that her editor reassign her to non-UBC stories.

It is an ironic comment on the climate in the university that we feel obliged to reveal these extremely personal aspects of our private lives. It may also be true that I can no longer serve as the public voice of the department if that creates an impression of bias. I want each of you to consider this matter and express your honest view about my future role.

Parton:

Although I had no personal relationship with David and had met him only once, I declared a potential conflict of interest to *Sun* city editor Gary Mason on July 31, and asked that he remove me from the story. I expected never to see or speak to David again, although I fervently hoped otherwise.

Unaware I was in a conflict, David telephoned me Friday, Aug. 4, with an update on the UBC story. I immediately told him in neutral terms I had read his book and was now off the story at my own request. I then invited David for a walk along the West Vancouver seawall, during which we realized we shared many ideas, interests and values. It was only then that I stopped calling him Dr. Elkins. David asked me to marry him one week to the day after our walk. I accepted without hesitation.

A Quebec visit in the spirit of de Gaulle

Almost 30 years have passed since the late French President Charles de Gaulle took an early flight home from Canada after tweaking diplomatic sensitivities with his rallying cry of "Vive le Quebec libre" from Montreal's City Hall. Now, Round 2 may be in the offing. On Sept. 12 and 13—when federalists and separatists will be gearing up for the official kickoff of Quebec's referendum on sovereignty—the provincial government will host a two-day visit by Philippe Seguin, president of France's National Assembly. Seguin is France's third-most-powerful politician, a political brawler and spiritual descendant of de Gaulle. And Seguin is no friend to Ottawa. He has never been content to merely whisper his sympathy for the Quebec separatist cause. Instead, his outspokenness earned him a rebuke last winter from Benoit Bouchard, Canada's ambassador to France. Bouchard suggested—perhaps prophetically but certainly ill-advisedly—that Seguin was a "loose cannon." Now, federal officials are nervously watching to see where Seguin takes aim, and how much gunpowder he will use on his visit. Seguin has already given the feds a taste of what he has in store: he turned down an invitation to visit Ottawa.



Séguin: political 'loose cannon'

Edited by BARBARA WICKENS

BEST-SELLERS

FICTION

1. **The Celestine Prophecy,** *James Redfield (1)*
2. **The Bridges of Madison County,** *Robert James Waller (2)*
3. **From Potter's Field,** *Patricia Cornwell (4)*
4. **Microserfs,** *Douglas Coupland (10)*
5. **Memnoch the Devil,** *Anne Rice (2)*
6. **The Piano Man's Daughter,** *Timothy Findley (4)*
7. **Therapy,** *David Lodge (9)*
8. **The Return of Merlin,** *Deepak Chopra*
9. **Lightning,** *Danielle Steel (5)*
10. **Beach Music,** *Pat Conroy (6)*

NONFICTION

1. **New Passages,** *Gail Sheehy (2)*
2. **Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil,** *John Berendt (4)*
3. **When Elephants Weep,** *Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson and Susan McCarthy (5)*
4. **Excelerate,** *Nuala Beck (1)*
5. **Being Digital,** *Nicholas Negroponte (3)*
6. **Model,** *Michael Gross (6)*
7. **Fingerprints of the Gods,** *Graham Hancock (7)*
8. **An Anthropologist on Mars,** *Oliver Sacks*
9. **Mars and Venus in the Bedroom,** *John Gray*
10. **Landscape and Memory,** *Simon Schama (5)*

() *Position last week*

Compiled by Brian Bethune

PASSAGES

DIED: Pioneering German-American photographer **Alfred Eisenstaedt,** 96, while vacationing on Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts. Eisenstaedt produced more than 2,500 picture stories and 90 cover photographs for *Life* magazine. He was famous for his photographs of well-known statesmen and movies stars, but his best-known work was his shot of a U.S. sailor in a passionate embrace with a nurse during VJ-Day celebrations in New York City's Times Square in 1945.



INDUCTED: Golf legend **Moe Norman,** 65, past winner of Canadian professional and amateur championships and a Masters competitor, into the Canadian Golf Hall of Fame, in a ceremony at the Foxwood Golf Club, a public course, near Kitchener, Ont.

RESIGNED: Lt.-Gen. **Gordon Reay,** 52, as commander of the Canadian army, a post he assumed in 1993. Reay, who oversaw the Forces during a period of tight budgets, controversial peacekeeping assignments and the disbanding of the discredited Canadian Airborne Regiment, said his job was done and it was time for someone else to take over.

RESIGNED: P.E.I. MLA **Rendy Cooke,** 34, from his legislature seat after being placed on two years' probation for fraudulently using his government calling card to make more than $5,000 worth of phone-sex calls.

RECOVERING: U.S. actor **Larry Hagman,** 63—J. R. Ewing in the TV show *Dallas*—from a 15-hour operation in Los Angeles to replace his liver, damaged by a tumor and a life of heavy drinking.

DIED: **Dwayne Goettel,** 31, keyboard player for the influential Vancouver-based rock band Skinny Puppy, of a heroin overdose at his Edmonton home.

FINED: American tennis player **Jeff Tarango,** 26, a total of $65,600 by two international and American tennis organizations, for accusing a French umpire of corruption and favoritism at Britain's Wimbledon tournament in July.

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Getting down to the business of business

BY DIANE FRANCIS

Canada and the United States were in great economic shape after the Second World War because they escaped the carnage and destruction others suffered. This gave the two North American neighbors a tremendous leg up on other nations. Our economies thrived for two glorious decades. Immigrants and investors poured in, and the wealthy Americans invested billions of dollars in Canada. Spoiled by such interest, Canadians began to worry about the pace and manner of development. And in its collective wisdom, the electorate began choosing politicians who applied the brakes to the country's breakneck industrialization and development. Ownership restrictions came into being, designed to discourage foreign investment. The National Energy Program confiscated property from foreign oil companies—then was eventually dismantled in disgrace. Provinces also restricted trade and investment from other parts of Canada, and municipalities erected obstacles to growth in the form of bureaucratic red tape, planning restrictions and outrageous taxes.

But Canada needs to stop applying the brakes. The world has changed profoundly. Free trade, the demise of communism and a fevered competition by countries to attract investors means that Canada's political priorities must change—or Canada will be left behind.

Fortunately, the electorate, in its collective and unconscious wisdom, is beginning to choose some politicians who are stepping on the accelerator, such as Ralph Klein, Gary Filmon and Mike Harris. Their victories are the first manifestation that Canadians indeed understand what has to happen. The swing to the right is totally in sync with the new planetary reality, with national borders disappearing and as free trade ascends permanently.

The ascension of free trade is irreversible and requires huge reforms. The only players

As other countries compete feverishly to attract foreign investment, Canada needs to stop applying the brakes

who will prosper will be those whose governments are efficient and business-oriented, and whose policies encourage free enterprise. Nations can no longer indulge in nationalism of any kind. Leaders who try to restrict foreign investment, as Pierre Elliott Trudeau did with the damaging Foreign Investment Review Agency or the National Energy Program, will simply force their country to lose out to others. Regions that indulge in other types of nationalism—such as Quebec separatists' disdain for anglophones or the use of the English language—cannot attract or keep talented individuals. Since the illegal language restrictions were imposed in Quebec by the Parti Quebecois in the mid-1970s, huge numbers of the province's most talented left for English Canada. Such linguistic chauvinism stripped Montreal of its role as the country's biggest, most important city.

The reality is also that countries cannot run deficits and rack up huge debts. Both lead to higher taxes and higher interest rates, adding unduly to the cost of doing business. Heavily taxed nations like Canada are at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to attracting foreign investors or well-heeled immigrants. High taxes also make it difficult to keep existing talent or corporations at home. While Canada has not lost many head offices to the United States, the grim fact is that multinationals operating here often expand outside Canada, due to the excessive burden of taxation and overregulation. This costs Canada jobs.

The necessity of eliminating deficits and reducing debts to manageable levels also requires nations to jettison many of the costs associated with the welfare state. One of the most damaging policies has been the provinces' open-ended and overly generous welfare entitlements. These are totally unnecessary and have artificially created unemployment by removing an incentive for many to work. This occurs when welfare payments are higher than what businesses can afford to pay for low- or entry level jobs.

Certainly, that has been the case in Canada for quite some time, with the result that entitlements have artificially created an underclass. These people lack job skills sufficient to more than match what they can make by doing nothing. So they do nothing.

Instead they should be waiting on tables, driving cabs or washing dishes to maintain themselves. They don't have to stay in such jobs for the rest of their lives if they hustle, have smarts or are ambitious. Of course, there's no guarantee that they won't stay in low paying or dead-end jobs. But by handcuffing them to welfare, governments guarantee that these people may never acquire better job skills. Such a policy is not only soul-destroying, it is totally unaffordable.

The new reality is that no nation can afford socialism either, with its inefficient, inflexible central planning ethos and its proclivity for creating bloated, expensive state enterprises. No nation can afford environmental restrictions greater than those imposed by competing nations. While pollution should be eliminated, it can only be attacked on a global basis so that pollution-happy countries do not enjoy economic advantages over the environmentally responsible. No nation can afford one-sided labor laws that favor unions and entrench unionization. In Ontario and British Columbia, the New Democrats favored unionized companies, thus denying taxpayers the right to lower costs. The NDP, wherever it has governed, has made it easier to unionize a workplace and made it virtually impossible for employees to remove their union. Heavily unionized nations with rigid labor markets are inefficient and costly places to do business.

Fortunately, Canada's voters are starting to get it. The electoral victories of the Reform party federally and the Tories in Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario, signal that Canadians are starting to realize that the business of Canada must be business. The tide of conservatism hopefully marks a profound and permanent shift in direction that is in sync with global events. We need more conservative leaders in Canada who will keep their foot firmly on the gas pedal. Brakes are not a luxury we can afford again.



CANADA

HE SAID, THEY SAID

Parizeau is odd man out at the premiers' conference

Perhaps only in a country as constitutionally challenged as Canada could such a debate occur. It was, after all, a discussion about whether an internal trade agreement was really an internal trade agreement and whether an independent country would be treated as an independent country. At one point, B.C. Premier Mike Harcourt was moved to exclaim: "If [Quebec] became a sovereign nation, it would then be another country." So it went last week in St. John's, Nfld., at the 36th annual conference of premiers and territorial leaders. The gathering featured, first, a highly charged disagreement between Quebec's Jacques Parizeau and the other leaders about potential relations with a sovereign Quebec, and then, after Parizeau left early, a sharp division among the others over national social policy.

Ostensibly, the debate involving Quebec was on the future of the country, and it opened in civilized tones. By all accounts, the first private discussion—in contrast to some of the premiers' arrival statements—had a distinctly Canadian tone: tolerant, cordial, animated in parts but without rancor. As Parizeau prepared to leave for Quebec City, to continue preparations for a fall referendum on sovereignty, Newfoundland Premier Clyde Wells joked that he hoped "we'll see you next year"—at the next premiers' conference, to be held in Alberta. Parizeau chuckled along with everyone else.

But a public spat had in fact broken out shortly after Parizeau left the first session, when he told reporters that the thinking of the other premiers had "evolved" and they had backed away from their hard line that Quebec could not retain its full trade ties with the rest of Canada if it voted to separate. That prompted the other premiers to respond. "You are either in the family or you are out," insisted Saskatchewan's Roy Romanow. New Brunswick's Frank McKenna accused Parizeau of "colossal trickery." Then, the remaining leaders issued a communiqué pointing out that Parizeau had agreed with them that any trade benefits "do not extend" to any entity outside the Canadian federation. Parizeau, who learned about the statement when he landed at Montreal's Mirabel airport, began drafting his own response.

He complained that, once again, Quebec had been attacked in its absence—a pointed reminder of what Quebec nationalists call the Night of the Long Knives in 1981, when a constitutional deal was worked out without the participation of then-Premier René Lévesque. "The government of Quebec deplores these incidents," the statement said. Federalists insisted that the message had gotten through to Quebecers that sovereignty would have an economic price. But it seemed certain that Parizeau will argue during the referendum campaign that Quebec can never get a square deal from the rest of the country and that there is, as he claimed in July, a federalist plot against him.

The dispute overshadowed other issues that the nine federalist premiers dealt with, including reform of social programs. Declared Manitoba's Gary Filmon: "We all agree the federal government has become a junior partner in financial health and education." And in a marked change from its historical stance, Ontario, represented by novice Conservative Premier Mike Harris, also urged a reduced federal role. But in the end, the premiers denounced the federal cutbacks without agreeing on what role Ottawa should play.

And despite the official agenda's focus on other matters, it was the Quebec question that dominated the meeting. With Parizeau having promised last week that he will soon announce a referendum date for late October or early November, the conference provided a foretaste of the campaign and an advance look at strategies that both sides will employ. The campaign will ask Quebecers to decide, in effect, whether they believe that sovereignty can be achieved with a minimal disruption in their lives. A poll released last week indicated the answer to that question remained unclear as the Yes forces appeared to have been stalled in their effort to persuade a clear majority to back the sovereignty cause. (page 12)



Premiers (left); Parizeau leaving with wife Lisette Lapointe; hijacking the annual meeting

The specific dispute that developed at the Hotel Newfoundland last week concerned an agreement on interprovincial trade signed last year—and the question of whether an independent Quebec could still participate in it. Parizeau and his nationalist partners in the coming referendum campaign argue that economic realities would force the rest of Canada to maintain its pattern of trade and business dealings with an independent Quebec. But other premiers tried to make it plain that, in the event of a Yes vote and Quebec sovereignty, all bets would be off. Said Romanow, who emerged as Parizeau's chief antagonist: "What the PQ government has been doing has been trying to sell the soft-landing message. They've been trying to say, we can get sovereignty and we can also get the benefits of the internal trade deal." Romanow said the message was merely a siren song to Quebec voters. "There's no soft landing," he vowed. Other premiers were just as blunt. "Sovereignty-association is a nonstarter," Harcourt told reporters. "You're in or you're out." Ontario's Harris noted that it would be unrealistic to expect Canada to treat an independent Quebec as just another province. Host Clyde Wells, who chaired the closed-door sessions, said there would, of course, be trade, but that it would be trade conducted between two independent states, with none of the benefits of a common market. "I can only assume that in the future the provinces of Canada will continue to give priority to the provinces of Canada, and if some part of what is now Canada ceased to be a part of Canada, it would cease to have that priority." And Wells, who championed opposition to the Meech Lake constitutional accord with its promise of distinct-society status for Quebec, said Canada would hardly refuse special status for Quebec as a province but then give it to Quebec as a separate country. It was a hard line going into the meeting, but Parizeau said himself as he arrived that he would have been surprised to receive a more congenial welcome. "It's perfectly understandable," he said, "and if I were in their position, I would take the same stance."

But just before returning to Quebec City, Parizeau emerged from the meeting to say that things had gone much better than he had expected. An attempt by Romanow to have the official communiqué note that the trade deal would not apply to an independent Quebec had been rejected by the other premiers. Parizeau said that defeat was a sign that his counterparts recognized the difference between politics and business. "Not all the deals are off," he said. "A common market is an economic concept, and nobody told me how many jobs they're ready to sacrifice to reduce the extent of that common market." Parizeau's officials said Romanow's defeat had been the victory of statesmanship. Even Wells seemed to offer some support to Parizeau with remarks to reporters that, while the interprovincial trade agreement applied only to provinces, "should a different circumstance arise in Canada in the future we'll have to deal with that event in the future." Said Parizeau: "You all heard Mr. Wells just before—that's quite a turnaround from what we heard yesterday."

Whether it was the turnaround that Parizeau claimed was an open question. Observers said that during the meeting, Parizeau managed to outflank Romanow by readily agreeing that he understood that the trade agreement applied only to provinces. Some premiers felt such an acknowledgment removed the need for a hard line in the communiqué, while others, like Alberta Premier Ralph Klein, did not want to formally acknowledge even the possibility of a sovereignty victory. Parizeau's remarks were cleverly timed, and enabled him to initially claim a victory. But his boasting angered other premiers who, while refusing to support Romanow's position, were concerned that their own voters would think they had gone soft on Quebec separatism. "Premiers began to think about the implications of Premier Parizeau going back to Quebec or elsewhere and saying, 'Well, things aren't so tough,' " Romanow told *Maclean's*. Filmon, when questioned about Parizeau's remarks, was angry and blunt, declaring: "He's totally misrepresenting what took place." Wells, who had been cited specifically by Parizeau, pointedly disputed the Quebecer's contention that there had been an evolution of the nine premiers' views. "That's not my judgment of events," he said. "Either Premier Parizeau misunderstood the very clear discussion that occurred with the premiers, or there is some other mischaracterization of it for some other reason."

Despite Parizeau's desire to maintain commercial ties in the event of independence, he also attempted at the same time to downplay those ties, noting that exchanges between Quebec and the United States have jumped 14 per cent a year over the last four years while trade with the other provinces has declined 1.7 per cent. Harcourt said that British Columbia would have nothing to lose from Quebec independence because it runs a trade deficit with the rest of the country, including Quebec. And he suggested that Quebec companies might have a tougher time doing business in the province in the event of a Yes vote. "The people of British Columbia would be very angry," Harcourt said. "That anger would be very real, very manifest." About 1.5 million jobs depend on trade between Canada and Quebec, Filmon said, 400,000 of them in Quebec. And Quebec's main business group, the Conseil du patronat, said last week that Quebec companies would lose the most in the event of separation because Quebec depends more on trade with the rest of the country than the reverse. Half of Quebec's exports go to the rest of Canada. "It would be illusory to think that negotiating the terms of a new economic space between an independent Quebec and Canada would unfold easily and without acrimony," said Ghislain Dufour, the Conseil president.

Although the unity issue took centre stage, the main item on the agenda was actually the reform of social programs, including medicare. Parizeau left before that discussion began, arguing that

he was not about to get drawn into "immense and cosmological discussions about the Canadian Constitution." In his absence, the other premiers agreed in their final communique that the federal government should involve the provinces in the reform, which gets under way in earnest later this year. The federal government is planning to overhaul unemployment insurance and old age pensions. Negotiations also begin by early 1996 on how Ottawa is to distribute federal payments to the provinces under its new Canada Health and Social Transfer, and on what standards should apply. In addition, federal Health Minister Diane Marleau has set a deadline of Oct. 15 for Alberta to crack down on private health clinics.

The recent cuts in federal transfers helped push the premiers into an alliance of one sort against Marleau, with a demand for an end to "unilateral actions and arbitrary deadlines." Romanow said in an interview that he feels uncomfortable in his sympathy with Klein because he opposes private clinics—Klein supports them—but that he has grown frustrated with Marleau and her refusal to involve the provinces in the federal forum on medicare. "The federal government seeks to set standards through the Canada Health Act but does not back up its standards with the financial clout necessary for its implementation." Filmon and others shared the frustration, noting that medicare is a provincial responsibility and that Ottawa's role in medicare has come from its financial involvement. With budget cuts, there must also come a reduction in the federal role. "As a junior partner," Filmon said, "the federal government can't expect to have a seat at the head of the table."

While a consensus eluded the premiers on how the reform of social programs should proceed and how to define national standards, they established a ministerial council on reform that is supposed to come up with answers by year's end. If consensus remains elusive, Wells himself indirectly recognized what the cost of failure would be. "The greater the level of consensus among the provinces, I believe, the greater the likelihood that we'll have some impact on the federal government."

One thing the premiers did make clear in St. John's was that, like the United Nations, their annual conference is a forum for discussion rather than decision. And despite their intentions, this year the premiers even failed to stop the unity issue from eclipsing the talk on social programs. Even as they turn their minds to next year's gathering in Alberta, there really is only one question: nine premiers or 10?

WARREN CARAGATA *in St. John's*

Hello, goodbye

Pity poor Jacques Parizeau. Try as he might, the Quebec premier simply cannot manage to light much of a fire under his campaign to take his province out of Canada. He was at it again last week in St. John's busily spinning the news and stage-managing events in an effort to sell the idea of independence—and the notion that Quebec is ever-destined to be humiliated as long as it remains in Canada—to the wary folks back home. This time he draped himself in the robes of a free trader. And when he dropped in—for all of three hours—on his fellow premiers in New



Bourassa: solace for both sides

foundland's capital, he hoped to persuade them that trade links mattered more than ties of national unity. Either they would agree, soothing Quebec voters' fears. Or they would not, inflaming Quebec voters' sensitivities. In the end, however, Parizeau appeared to come up short on both counts.

The Quebec premier did succeed in annoying the rest of the country's provincial and territorial leaders by placing his own interpretation on the discussions that unfolded behind closed doors in Newfoundland. But the resulting communiqué battle, labelled a "disagreeable incident" by Parizeau on his return to Montreal, did not ignite the kind of backlash in Quebec likely to translate into votes for the secessionist option in the coming referendum. True, there was muttering on the talk shows and in the province's French-language press about Quebec's isolation, a development the nationalist-minded *Le Devoir* grumpily described as being left "alone in the corner." But in general reaction was mild. More to the point, it came amid signs of disarray within the separatist camp as well as a new public opinion poll that detects no sign of an upsurge in popular support for independence.

The new survey, conducted from Aug. 17 to Aug. 23 by the Léger & Léger polling company for the newspapers *Le Journal de Montréal* and *The Globe and Mail* of Toronto, reported 45.3 per cent oppose a question linking sovereignty to an offer of a new economic and political partnership with Canada, 44.4 per cent are in favor and slightly more than 10 per cent are undecided or refuse to answer on how they would vote in a referendum. The percentage of No—anti-sovereignty—voters who say they are unlikely to change their mind is much higher than Yes voters.

A poll taken earlier in August by SOM Inc. of Montreal for *The Gazette* in Montreal and Quebec City's *Le Soleil* turned up a 60-40 vote against independence when it is not coupled with proposals of such economic and political ties with Canada. That is why Parizeau, once an unabashed separatist, has worked so hard to forge an alliance with Bloc Québécois Leader Lucien Bouchard and Mario Dumont of the Parti action démocratique, who favor such links. But the separatist trinity is not completely in tune. On Wednesday, Bouchard insisted that the upcoming referendum is the last. Declared Bouchard: "People who say Yes to the question will know for certain that this is the last time they will have to express an opinion on the future of Quebec." But the next day, Dumont raised the possibility of a second vote to seek approval for the negotiations with Canada that are planned in the wake of a Yes vote.

Contributing to the ambivalence and uncertainties confronting Quebecers, this week sees the release of a book by former premier Robert Bourassa that may provide fodder for both sides. The book, to be published by the Montreal-based Editions Fides company in French, is a collection of lectures that Bourassa has given at the University of Montreal. A Bourassa associate who has seen the manuscript said that, while he remains a federalist, the former premier reaffirms his insistence that Quebec must be granted wide, new constitutional powers. Bourassa, who appears to have recovered his health after a life-threatening bout with skin cancer in 1990, was planning to emerge briefly from his self-imposed isolation for a reception launching the book. A former aide said Bourassa spent last week resting at his country house near Sorel, close by the St. Lawrence River and 100 km from Montreal. Like other Quebecers, he was probably savoring the last calm days of summer before the inevitable autumn referendum storm that lies ahead.

BARRY CAME *in Montreal*

When Cappadocia's early Christian settlers moved on, they left behind more than 3000 churches, houses and entire cities carved into and under the surrounding rock. Up until recently, Turkish locals used the abandoned caves as wine cellars. Today, the remnants of Turkey's religious past exist in colourful contrast with its modern side, where you'll find prestigious mosques, luxury resorts and warm, welcoming people as rich in character and heritage as the country itself. For your next vacation, discover Turkey; the land that's been fascinating travellers since 8000 B.C.

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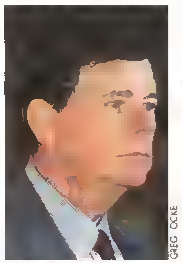
Cave Dwellings, Cappadocia.

To the modern traveller it's an enchanted landscape of sweeping ridges and stone-carved dwellings. To the early Christian, it was home.

An unholy war over schools

A referendum on denominational schools stirs Newfoundlanders

The television ad—one of four spots being broadcast across Newfoundland last week as part of the No campaign in a Sept. 5 referendum on the future of the province's school system—pulls no punches. Against the backdrop of blue, sunny skies, it depicts a well-manicured hand—meant to represent the long arm of government—picking apples from a tree. The voice-over explains that although the province's churches have agreed to more than 90 per cent of the government's proposed education reforms, Premier Clyde Wells wants still more concessions. Suddenly the hand, unable to grasp the highest apple on the tree, seizes a chain saw and fires it into action. "On Sept. 5," intones the voice-over, "vote No and keep the faith in education."



GREG OCKE

Wells: facing the backlash factor

The ad, jointly sponsored by the Roman Catholic and Pentecostal churches, is just the latest salvo in Newfoundland's sometimes unholy war over school reform. In a classic struggle of church versus state, Newfoundland's religious leaders are urging voters to defeat provincial government proposals that would significantly reduce the control that the churches have traditionally exercised over education. Wells's Liberal government says that it is simply practising fiscal restraint: it claims that its plan to replace the province's 27 school boards, which are currently operated by four separate denominational groups, with 10 interdenominational boards, will save taxpayers up to $30 million annually. But church leaders say the government is paving the way for the elimination of religious-based schools, replacing them with an entirely secular system. As Newfoundland's Anglican bishops warned in a recent letter to their parishioners: "We have every reason to fear that the current religious education program could be placed in dire jeopardy."

For Newfoundlanders, that would mark a dramatic departure from a tradition that dates back to the 1720s, when the Church of England's Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts founded the province's first school in Bonavista, 300 km north of St. John's. In a province where communities were small and far-flung, and where local governments were few and impoverished, the churches took responsibility for building and operating the schools. Unlike other English-Canadian provinces, where Protestant schools eventually became public and nondenominational, secular schools never gained a foothold in Newfoundland. Instead, when it joined Confederation in 1949, Newfoundland's schools were controlled by six different denominations (Roman Catholic, Anglican, United Church, Presbyterian, Salvation Army and Seventh-day Adventist). Under the Terms of Union, each of the denominations was granted constitutional protection and the promise that "the Legislature will not have authority to make laws prejudicially affecting any right or privilege" of church-controlled schools. In 1987, that same protection was extended to the province's Pentecostals.



SHANE FEELY

The Wells's government now wants to amend that document, which is part of the Canadian Constitution. After more than two years of talks between the province and church leaders ended in stalemate in May, the premier said he would seek a mandate from voters to proceed with the proposed school reforms. In the event of a Yes vote, the government intends to ask the House of Commons and the Senate to alter the Terms of Union in order to remove the churches' ability to legally challenge any changes to the education system that affect denominational schools. Wells says that he has already had preliminary discussions with Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and adds that he is confident Ottawa will support the amendment if the Yes side wins. A spokesman for the Prime Minister's Office said last week that Chrétien has not yet taken a position and will "keep our options open" until after the referendum.

The provincial government maintains that the current system of denominational schools is expensive, cumbersome and sometimes discriminatory. Education Minister Chris Decker says that in a time of declining enrolment, too many small schools are being kept in operation and too many students are being bused long distances for the sake of denominational purity. He cites the example of a group of Seventh-day Adventist students from the southeast coastal community of Kelligrews who are being bused 35 km to an Adventist school in St. John's—even though, in Decker's words, "some of the best schools in the province" are available much closer to home. "I can't think of anything less productive for a child than to sit on a bus for an hour or more a day," says Decker. "It's a total waste of time."

Under the government's reform proposal, children would attend the schools closest to their homes and most schools would accommodate all denominations. The existing 27 school boards would be amalgamated into 10. Each board would have 15 members, with up to 10 members elected on a proportional basis from among the denominations and the remaining five without regard to religious affiliation. (Together, Newfoundland's mainline churches claim 95 per cent of Newfoundland's population as affiliates, with Catholics representing 37 per cent, the Anglicans 26 per cent, the United Church 17 per cent, the Salvation Army 8 per cent, and the Pentecostals 7 per cent.) The boards would still have the power to establish denominational schools where numbers warrant, and the government insists, would be able to retain religious instruction and activities in all schools.



SHANE FEELY

Newfoundland students at play; Fallon (left): fears of a power grab by the government

Still, even the government acknowledges that its plan would significantly diminish the churches' role in operating schools. One of the most controversial areas is the hiring of teachers. Currently, school boards can discriminate on the basis of religion and hire only practising Christians. Under the reform proposals that would end—a move that critics say strikes at the heart of Christian-based education. "If you're going to have a Christian school you need teachers who understand and support the philosophy and are able to carry forth the mission of the school," says Pastor Earl Batstone, executive director of Newfoundland's Pentecostal Education Council. "Those Christian values and ethics permeate the whole school atmosphere."

The churches are also concerned that, if the government gets its way, everything from school prayer to Christian symbols to observance of religious holidays could be open to legal challenges. "We've had examples across the country where, because of judicial interpretations, you can no longer have a Bible in the classroom, or say the Lord's Prayer or have a Christmas concert," says Hubert Norman, executive director of the Integrated Education Council, which represents the Anglican, United, Presbyterian and Salvation Army denominations.

Church representatives insist that they, too, are eager to streamline Newfoundland's education system. But they say that the savings the government seeks can be realized without stripping the denominations of their constitutional rights. Noting that the government already controls such things as curriculum, teacher certification and school evaluation, Gerald Fallon, executive director of the Catholic Education Council, suggests that the province's reform package represents little more than a power grab. "The government controls 90 per cent of the education system," he says. "The focus now is on who will control the remaining 10 per cent."

For all of the churches' objections, the referendum campaign has been relatively low-key. True enough, the Catholics and the Pentecostals are treating it like an election effort: in addition to the television spots, they are running radio and print ads, canvassing door-to-door and tracking potential supporters on computers. But most of the other denominations have limited their involvement to polite letters to their parishioners that urge them to become better informed about the issues at stake—but stop short of telling them how to vote.

As for the government, it has done little more than distribute brochures setting out its case to the province's voters. Said Wells last week: "If the majority of people in this province genuinely do not want the changes government has proposed, why should we spend taxpayers' dollars to advocate something against their interests?"

As of late last week, there had not been any published polls indicating where Newfoundlanders stand on the referendum question. But some analysts say that the timing of the vote—the day after the Labor Day weekend when many people are just coming back from vacation—may mean a low voter turnout, while the polarizing issues involved could lead to a close verdict. "There's always been a small number of people here who are very much opposed to denominationalism and another group that is very much in favor," says John Netten, an education professor at Memorial University in St. John's. "The rest of the population is more or less neutral and doesn't get worked up about it."

But Netten adds that there are some obvious wild cards at play in the current debate, some of which could strengthen the government's hand and others that could weaken it. While church leaders have traditionally exercised a strong influence over Newfoundland public opinion that may be waning, he notes, in the wake of scandals involving the sexual abuse of boys by priests at the Catholic-run Mount Cashel orphanage. On the other hand, after six years in power, Wells faces the almost inevitable prospect of voter backlash—a fact that the Catholic and Pentecostal ads appear eager to exploit by prominently featuring the image and statements of the premier. "There are some who say," observes Netten, "that 'if Wells is for it, I'm agin' it.' " If that proves a popular sentiment, the feisty premier may soon rue the day that he launched his crusade against one of the most firmly entrenched interest groups in his province.

BRIAN BERGMAN *with DEANA STOKES SULLIVAN in St. John's*



MARK VAN MANEN/VANCOUVER SUN

Ignace and colleagues' 'body bags'

Echoes of Oka

The 1970s reggae hit *I Shot The Sheriff* wafted on warm breezes across the native encampment on a cattle ranch in central British Columbia that had become the unlikely focus of national attention. As an anthem, it seemed eerily appropriate. The self-styled "Defenders of the Shuswap Nation," a well-armed renegade group of natives who have been occupying part of the James Cattle Company ranch at Gustafsen Lake since June 30, vowed last week to shoot it out if the RCMP tried to evict them. After several incidents in recent weeks in which shots had been fired at Mounties and forestry officials, and police had seized an arsenal of weapons that they said belonged to the native protesters, the rebels' leaders were expecting the Mounties to storm their base at any moment. "They'll have to take us out in body bags," vowed one of the group, William Ignace, who calls himself Wolverine. Then, on Friday, a day before the RCMP's deadline for the approximately 30 rebels to lay down their arms, Ovide Mercredi, the Ottawa-based grand chief of the Assembly of First Nations, entered the scene, hoping to mediate the dispute peacefully.

It was a tough assignment for Mercredi, whose dealings with the government as national leader of the native community made him suspect to the rebel group, which spoke of its distrust of a New World Order conspiracy. After a round of discussions with the natives on Friday produced no resolution, he returned on Saturday to give the talks one last chance. The RCMP, meanwhile, tightened security around the ranch and stopped traffic going in and out. A spokesman said that, barring substantial progress in Mercredi's negotiations, police were ready to move over the next few days to regain the occupied land, using force if necessary.

The rebels, meanwhile, remained defiant. In a protest that does not have the support of other natives in the area, they are claiming the occupied land as sacred ground. As Mercredi was leaving after his first, unproductive, talks someone on the site fired off a round, but no one was hurt. Mercredi had refused to sign a document that they presented, asking for an Ottawa-based lawyer to be given the authority to call on the Queen to convene a special council. That body, they proposed, would consider charges of genocide and fraud against the Supreme Court of Canada, and against Mercredi himself.

Shortly before the grand chief arrived at the site, the RCMP reported that two protesters had fired about 25 rounds from what appeared to be assault rifles at an RCMP helicopter. Although no one was hurt, the incident clearly angered the police force, which had already denounced the native camp as a "gang of thugs." The Mounties bluntly rejected an offer from the militant natives to lay down their arms in return for a guarantee of criminal immunity. "The RCMP is still amenable to talking to this group," Sgt. Peter Montague told reporters, "but only on terms of arranging a swift, decisive, unconditional surrender." B.C. Attorney General Ujjal Dosanjh said that ownership of the ranch land was no longer an issue in the standoff. "Shots have been fired, including at a Mountie," the minister said. "This is a case of undisputed lawlessness."

Mercredi said he was hoping to avoid a repeat of the crisis that erupted in 1990 near Oka, Que., and led to the death of a young police officer and a 78-day armed standoff between Mohawk Warriors and authorities. "Some people want it to be that," he said, referring to the attitude of the renegade band. "All the outside appearances are there: the military garb, the so-called warrior image." Mercredi stressed that he supported neither the militants' cause nor their means of achieving it. In that, he was not alone. "They don't seem to respect anything," said Tommy Johnson, a land-claims officer at the nearby Alkali Lake reserve whose aunt is the estranged wife of one of the rebels, Percy Rosette. "I think they are anarchists." Premier Mike Harcourt, in St. John's, Nfld., for the annual premiers' meeting, urged the RCMP to move cautiously against the native dissidents because they were dealing with "fanatics."

The protesters themselves, mainly malcontents from across the province, were tight-lipped about their origins—and given to flights of rhetoric when asked about their motivations. In a rambling interview with *Maclean's*, Ignace said the occupation began as a dispute over where natives could hold a healing ritual known as the Sundance ceremony. In the next breath, he denounced Indian reserves as "concentration camps," the RCMP as an "illegal occupation force" and native band councils as "puppet governments selling out our people to an illegal government."

A renegade group of B.C. natives vows to fight to the death

Sidelined by the dispute is the Montana-born owner of the ranch, Lyle James, who five years ago gave permission to a small group of natives, including Rosette, to hold Sundance ceremonies on his land. In June, Rosette had fenced off part of his property, disrupting the movement of cattle. Ignoring an eviction notice from James, the natives fired shots in the air when provincial forestry workers approached the site in early July. Almost two months later, as they resisted a native leader's efforts to settle the dispute, they were vowing still to use their guns.

ROBIN AJELLO *at Gustafsen Lake*

Canada NOTES

SAVING FACE

Responding to widespread complaints about pork-barrel politics, Public Works Minister David Dingwall reversed an earlier decision to divert $26 million in federal funds to upgrading a secondary road that runs through his Cape Breton riding. The funds will be restored to their original purpose, building a four-lane bypass to eliminate a dangerous stretch of the Trans-Canada Highway, known as Death Valley, in Wentworth Valley of Nova Scotia, where 40 people have died since 1986.

PEARSON INQUIRY

A Senate inquiry heard that Fred Doucet, a lobbyist who once served as a senior aide to Brian Mulroney, had signed contracts worth at least $2 million in early 1993 with Paxport Inc., a company that was then vying to run Toronto's Pearson airport. Doucet, who served as Mulroney's senior adviser from 1984 to 1987, acknowledged that he had a strong economic interest in the success of the deal, which was approved by the former Conservative government just 18 days before the October, 1993, federal election and cancelled by the Liberals that December. But he told the inquiry that he did not lobby any government officials to get the deal signed.

DELAYING THE IRVING WHALE

Federal Court Judge John Richard halted a massive salvage operation to raise the Irving Whale, an oil barge that sank off the coast of Prince Edward Island 25 years ago. Richard said that the potentially dangerous presence of PCBs aboard the Irving Whale was not sufficiently taken into account by a three-year federal environmental review that released its report in July. Federal officials said the ruling means the salvage operation will be postponed at least until sometime in 1996. The project, which got under way in late July and was repeatedly delayed by bad weather, has already cost $12 million.

RAGING INFERNOS

Residents were forced to flee their homes as forest fires raged through northern Ontario and Quebec. About 1,000 people were evacuated from Dubreuilville, Ont., 200 km north of Sault Ste. Marie, because two fires set deliberately by Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources on Aug. 2, as part of an effort to regenerate the forest, had got out of control in unexpected winds. Another 500 people who had to leave Perent, Que., 500 km north of Montreal, for five days after a fire advanced to within 10 km of their homes were allowed to return at week's end.



CHRIS WATTIE/REUTERS

LIGHTING UP THE NIGHT: A spectacular meteor streaks over the Ottawa-Hull region in the early hours of Aug. 26. The celestial display was seen as far afield as Pennsylvania and North Bay, Ont., part of an annual meteor shower, known as the Perseids, that lights up the sky every August with thousands of small shooting stars.

Judgment Day for Bernardo

After 53 days of searing and sometimes horrifying testimony from 86 witnesses, the end was almost anticlimactic. Crown attorney Ray Houlahan completed a gruelling, emotionally charged, five-day cross-examination of Paul Bernardo, the 31-year-old former bookkeeper who was testifying at his own first-degree murder trial, by quietly declaring, "Those are my questions." A few minutes later, Bernardo's lawyer, John Rosen, told trial judge Patrick LeSage that "the defence elects to call no more witnesses."

With that, the trial entered its final stage. Rosen and Houlahan were expected to make their arguments to the jury starting Aug. 28, and afterward LeSage will instruct the jurors on the potential verdicts available to them. Then, the eight men and four women will decide whether Bernardo is guilty of the brutal sex slayings of 14-year-old Leslie Mahaffy and 15-year-old Kristen French.

In his testimony, Bernardo admitted kidnapping, confining and sexually assaulting his victims, but said they died accidentally while left alone with his ex-wife Karla Homolka, now 25 and serving concurrent 12-year sentences for manslaughter for her role in the killings. The evidence against Bernardo included 3½ hours of home-made videotapes depicting him and Homolka sexually assaulting both girls. Some of the most contentious testimony came from Homolka, who spent 17 days on the stand and told the jury that she watched her husband strangle French and Mahaffy in the master bedroom of their St. Catharines, Ont., home with a black electrical cord. Although she was the Crown's star witness, Homolka's role in the crimes has provoked public outrage—including petitions asking the newly elected Conservative government to overturn a plea-bargain agreement under which Homolka received relatively lenient treatment in exchange for testifying against Bernardo. Ontario Premier Mike Harris told reporters last week that his government will examine the matter once Bernardo's trial is finished.

HARDLINE HOSPITALITY

China draws fire as it prepares to host a women's rights conference

Among foreigners, the dusty city of Huairou is best known as a public toilet stop for tourists on their way to the Great Wall. But in the view of Chinese propagandists, the site "has it all" for the 36,000 women activists who will gather there this week in advance of the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, an hour and a half to the south. Huairou, said a headline in the state-run *Beijing Weekend*, is "well-planned, clean, bright and orderly." Well planned? A week before participants in the forum for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) began to arrive, roofs, walls and electrical wiring were not yet installed in many conference buildings. Even when the work is completed, Huairou will only be able to house a third of the registered delegates, many of whom will have to bunk in groups of 40 in rooms built for six. Others learned they would have to bus it 50 km each way from Beijing. Meanwhile, bureaucratic delays left hundreds of women around the world without visitor visas as their flight dates neared. "It's a chaotic and disorganized environment for the work to take place in," said Sunera Thobani, president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, one of nearly 800 Canadians heading to Beijing this week.

Banishing the NGOs to a substandard hinterland has helped to turn the UN conference—an event that China hoped would boost the country's image—into a diplomatic fiasco even before it starts. Worse still, in preparation for the conference, the country's rulers launched an exhaustive security crackdown, one of a number of recent measures that are undermining their efforts to win back the West's favor since the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre that killed more than 3,000 citizens and student protesters.

Hosting the UN women's conference was a breakthrough for China, especially after the humiliating defeat two years ago of Beijing's elaborate bid for the 2000 Summer Olympics. But with 91-year-old leader Deng Xiaoping ailing, Prime Minister Li Peng has adopted an aggressive stance, apparently to assure outsiders of the nation's political stability. Along with a massive increase in defence spending—up 34 per cent in 1994 alone, by China's own admission—the country has provoked Western wrath with its refusal to end underground nuclear testing. The past 18 months have seen a renewed round-up of Chinese dissidents, culminating in the recent arrest and conviction of prominent human rights activist Harry Wu on espionage charges. Li himself cannot seem to tolerate criticism. Last year, he cut short an official trip to Germany after being rankled by a handful of human rights protesters. The episode seems to have foreshadowed his approach to this week's conferences.

As participants began to stream into Huairou for the world's largest official meeting of women, County Chief Zhao Yuhe repeatedly warned that foreigners "must obey Chinese laws," which ban public demonstrations. As a precaution, an additional 4,650 security officers were brought in to assist the town's usual force of 750 police. Local functionaries have told residents that many of the delegates—who were to include members of the family-first lobby REAL Women of Canada—are prostitutes, people with AIDS and lesbians. The wild women rumors were so pervasive that security officials in Beijing armed themselves with white sheets in case the women converge on Tiananmen Square to stage a nude protest. Beijing taxi drivers have been ordered to spy on passengers and report to superiors any overheard conversations about public protests. "Freedom of expression is totally devoid of meaning at this conference," says Ariane Brunet, women's rights co-ordinator of the Montreal-based International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development.

The clampdown is yet another illustration of how China's rush to westernize its economy clashes with its own totalitarian impulses (page 24). This time, the desire to open doors will result in the incongruous sight of 50,000 foreigners—including thousands of journalists—discussing human rights in a place with a dismal human rights record. This summer, Wu became the clearest symbol of Chinese repression and the focus of strained U.S.-Chinese relations, which some observers say have sunk to their lowest level since China began its program of economic liberalization 16 years ago. Wu, 56, who spent 19 years in Chinese prisons, immigrated to the United States in 1979 and has since become an American citizen. In June, Chinese authorities arrested him while he was trying to enter China from Kazakhstan. Last week, responding to U.S. pressure, the Chinese expelled Wu, sparing him a court-ordered sentence of 15 years for alleged spying.

Other less-publicized cases have multiplied in recent weeks. One well-known activist, Tong Zeng, was arrested and forced to travel to southern China so he would not lobby the UN conference on behalf of Chinese victims of Japanese war atrocities. Christian dissident Gao Feng was taken into custody as he prepared an appeal for Liu Gang, a leader of the 1989 democracy movement who was released recently after six years in jail, but is not allowed to associate with other dissidents. And last week, two Hong Kong journalists were arrested while researching a story on China's recent missile tests near Taiwan. And authorities detained Chinese dissident Ding Zilin, a philosophy professor who had been campaigning for the government to recognize the pro-democracy movement, to prevent her from meeting conference delegates. "One would wish the Chinese would not take that kind of action," said Madeleine Albright, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, who is heading the American delegation. Yet Albright dismissed as "counterproductive" calls that the U.S. protest the arrests by boycotting the conference.

Wu's release and subsequent departure for San Francisco eased U.S.-Chinese tensions just as U.S. Undersecretary of State Peter Tarnoff arrived in Shanghai for four days of fence-mending talks. It also came in time for Hillary Rodham Clinton, who had postponed a decision pending the outcome of Wu's case, to announce that she would attend the UN conference after all. Her presence in Beijing, conference organizers said, would lend moral weight to the struggle of women everywhere, and particularly in China, home to a nearly a quarter of the earth's population.

The communist social-safety net means that Chinese women are better off than many others in the Third World. And feudal practices such as foot binding—an excruciatingly painful custom in which girls' feet were kept tightly wrapped—have been illegal for decades. But modern China's one-child policy means sterilization and forced abortion for millions of women—in some cases as late as the eighth month of pregnancy. According to Chinese press reports, 97.5 per cent of the fetuses aborted in the country are female. Even some who do make it to birth soon wash up on riverbanks, victims of infanticide. In 1993 alone, registries recorded 500,000 more male than female births—almost enough to populate the city of Ottawa. Some of the imbalance is due to under-reporting of female births, many of those girls are raised secretly or abandoned to orphanages, which are now doing a growing business in foreign adoption. And while China's booming economy has created millions of jobs for women, they are still the last hired and first fired. The divorce rate, meanwhile, has doubled since 1990 to 24 per cent of all marriages, leaving women economically disadvantaged in ways more familiar to their First World sisters.

Canada's official delegation, led by Liberal MP Sheila Finestone, secretary of state for women, clearly hopes that the focus in Beijing and Huairou will be on such issues rather than on conference logistics. "The bureaucracy there has been an irritant," Finestone acknowledged in Ottawa last week. Finestone, along with former NDP leader Audrey McLaughlin and 40 other official delegates, will be working with other women to ensure that the final communique is not dictated by delegates who oppose abortion and artificial birth control. Finestone also intends to explain to the conference Ottawa's own plans to promote gender equality. The program would bring 24 federal agencies together to fight what she calls the "feminization of poverty" in Canada—a reference to the fact that older women and single mothers are among the poorest people in the country. Canada, which comes first in a UN ranking of quality of life, drops to ninth place after factoring in the gap between male and female living conditions.

With 184 countries represented at the conference, each with a myriad of pet issues and interest groups, it is unlikely the Chinese government will be able to keep a lid on the proceedings. Nor is Beijing likely to succeed with its strategy of stranding the NGO women out of the city where they will be easier to control and harder to hear. Many delegates have said the question is not whether they will protest, but how and when. Said Canada's Brunet: "There's no way hell is not going to be raised." If things turn rough, China may wind up losing its gamble for greater international influence. Conference delegates can only hope that the winners are not Chinese security forces, but the world's women.

NOMI MORRIS *with* **LUKE FISHER** *in Ottawa and* **CASEY STEVENS** *in Beijing*



Beijing peasant women: sensitivity about a dismal human-rights record

RIGHTS AND WRONGS

As more than 50,000 delegates and observers arrived in Beijing this week for the world's largest conference on women's rights, China is under fire for:

- Recent arrests of several dissidents, including Harry Wu, expelled from the country last week after a court sentenced him to15 years in prison for spying.
- Executing 16 people this month and sentencing another 10 to death for drug dealing, rape and other crimes.
- Carrying out a nuclear test blast earlier this month, the second since May.
- Moving a parallel conference for nongovernmental organizations out of Beijing, refusing to admit certain delegates from Tibet and blocking other participants unwanted by China.
- Carrying out military exercises near Taiwan—including firing missiles—and reportedly agreeing to sell arms to Iran.



Wu: expelled from the country

Targeting the tourists



Sightseers in Egypt hitting the economy

A beheaded Norwegian trekker in the Himalayas, an American student blown apart by a suicide bomber on a Jerusalem bus, 17 Paris sightseers felled by molten, five-inch nails spewed from a home-made grenade near the Arc de Triomphe—it has been a tragic, disturbing summer season for tourists. The victims were innocents, caught in the violence of some other country's political struggle. But the recent spate of attacks in which foreign travellers have died also poses a question: are terrorists deliberately targeting tourists?

It would not be a new tactic. Airline passengers have been prime terrorist targets since the 1970s, and in 1985 Palestinian guerrillas hijacked the Achille Lauro cruise liner and murdered Leon Klinghoffer, a 69-year-old American tourist. But most extremists prefer to direct their violence at symbols of the state (such as the Basque separatists who last week admitted to having tried to assassinate King Juan Carlos of Spain). It was Egypt's Gama'a Al-Islamiya, a radical Islamic group, that modified modern guerrilla theory. By spraying buses and Nile River tour boats with automatic weapons fire, they made it their well-publicized goal to chase foreign visitors and their currency out of Egypt. Their aim was simple—to bring the country to its economic knees by destroying its nearly $4-billion-a-year tourist industry. For a time, the tactic seemed to be working. In 1993, Egypt's income from tourism dropped 31 per cent.

But Cairo responded swiftly and repressively to the threat. In the last two years, Egyptian police have rounded up Islamic militants en masse and killed several alleged leaders in shootouts. It is still too early to say whether the crackdown has contained the fundamentalist threat to the regime, which is plagued by social unrest over the country's huge disparities in wealth. But if nothing else, the decline in tourism has stabilized. "In the end, the effect was little more than a kick in the shins," said one western diplomat in Cairo.

That failure has not stopped other radical groups from adopting a similar strategy. Tourists make easy targets because, as the diplomat pointed out, "they are slow-moving, big, pink and obvious." In Algeria, the Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA) pointedly ordered foreigners to leave the country last year. Since then, GIA militants have killed dozens of foreigners, and the country is now effectively closed to outsiders. In early July, meanwhile, separatists in the contested Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir seized five western tourists, one of whom was found beheaded on Aug. 13. Since 1989, when the guerrilla war began, tourism in the region has fallen from 700,000 annual visitors to less than 9,000 last year.

Terrorists have a lot to gain by attacking visitors to their countries

Most of that decline was an indirect result of the war in the snow-capped mountains. But by snatching the westerners—Indian officials said last week they were making progress in talks to free the captives—the Al-Faran separatist group brought international attention to a bloody struggle that until now has claimed as many as 20,000 Kashmiri lives without attracting widespread publicity. "You can hurt the tourist trade by setting bombs on beaches, but it is pretty hard to overthrow a government that way," said Richard Clutterbuck, a former British soldier who has written several books on terrorism and its tactics. "Almost always, however, the prime aim is to grab publicity. And if you hit tourists, you do tend to get on page one."

In Paris, owners of a glitzy new Planet Hollywood restaurant on the Champs Elysees cancelled their planned celebrity-studded opening party in the aftermath of the bomb, citing the security risk. But no one in authority was suggesting that the attacks in Paris or Jerusalem were primarily aimed at tourists. "The Paris targets were traditional, an attempt to hit at the heart of France," says Clutterbuck. And some diplomats in Paris believe that the bombings were a sign of GIA weakness. "In recent months, they have gone back to car bombs, which are the easiest operations to mount," said one. "The aim is the same as always: to provoke the authorities into a crackdown on Muslims living in France, hoping to create more converts from that community to their cause. And, as usual, it isn't working."

The seeds of that terrorist tactic—pushing the state into an overreaction that ultimately will undermine its authority—were sprinkled through radical texts by 1960s revolutionaries. The manual has been worn thin by imitators on every continent, with no long-term successes to show for their bombing and shooting. Meanwhile, tourists keep travelling. "Bombs go off everywhere, so we seldom see changed patterns right away," said Billy Hawkins, marketing director at Trailfinders, a London-based agency. "Travel to Egypt fell off gradually, and it is gradually coming back." Ottawa currently warns against travel to 17 countries, most of them obvious rogues such as Rwanda, Bosnia and Algeria. India, however, is not one of them. On the other hand, India is included on the roster of countries where Canadians are advised to use caution. That list has 134 names.

BRUCE WALLACE *in London*

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As rising health care costs continue to be a problem, medications which reduce overall costs will be very much a part of the solution. And many of these will come from Pfizer. Because we're part of the cure.

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1 Canadian Mental Health Association, 1995

World NOTES

REFUGEES EXPELLED

Zairean troops forcibly expelled about 15,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees from camps in eastern Zaire. The Hutus fled their homeland last year after the rival Tutsi-dominated Rwanda Patriotic Front seized power. The Hutus have since been afraid to return to Rwanda, fearing they will be killed in reprisal for the genocide by Hutu troops and militias of at least 500,000 Tutsis and Hutu moderates.

INDIAN RAIL TRAGEDY

About 300 people were killed and more than 400 injured when a crowded passenger train rammed into another that was stalled on a track in northern India. The first train had hit a cow, damaging its brake system, less than a kilometre away from the next station at Firozabad. A signalman had no time to alert the oncoming train, which collided with such force that it crushed six cars on each vehicle.

CAMPAIGN SEX CRIMES

A U.S. congressman faces a minimum of four years in jail after jurors found him guilty of having sex with an underage campaign volunteer. Chicago Democrat Mel Reynolds was convicted of sexual misconduct and obstructing justice for having sex with a 16-year-old and asking her to procure explicit pictures of a 15-year-old. The 43-year-old Reynolds claimed he only had telephone sex with the girl.

NAZI GOES FREE

Italians and Jews were outraged when an Argentine appeals court threw out a request to extradite a Nazi implicated in the Ardeatine Caves massacre, Italy's worst wartime atrocity. Former SS Capt. Erich Priebke, 81, was released after 15 months of house arrest that followed his admission in a book and on television. Argentina's justice minister said he hopes the country's highest court will reinstate the deportation order. The appeals court said that Priebke's role in the massacre constituted a war crime, not a crime against humanity. But the judge in the case later put Priebke under house arrest after Germany filed a separate request for extradition.

SIMPSON JURY SETS RECORD

Los Angeles Judge Lance Ito told jurors in the O. J. Simpson murder trial last week that they had become the longest-serving sequestered jury in American legal history, after 227 days of sequestration. The previous record was set in the 1970-1971 trial of Charles Manson, convicted of the murder of Sharon Tate and six others.



YON JAE-HO—REUTER

WORLDWIDE WEDDING: More than 35,000 couples from the Unification Church exchanged marriage vows in a mass wedding at Seoul's Olympic Stadium orchestrated by South Korean evangelist and cult leader Sun Myung Moon. Many of the brides and grooms had met only hours or days earlier. Another 325,000 Moonie couples around the globe were married simultaneously by satellite, in what church officials said was the world's largest mass wedding.

Israeli bombing

The militant Muslim group Hamas claimed responsibility for a morning rush-hour suicide bombing that ripped through two commuter buses headed for Jerusalem's Hebrew University. Five people died and more than 100 were injured. In the wake of the attack, protesters opposed to the ongoing Arab-Israeli peace talks called on the government of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to halt peace negotiations. But while Rabin suspended talks with the Palestinian Liberation Organization for one day to mourn the dead, he said the two sides would still sign an accord in Washington next month, extending Palestinian self-rule in the occupied West Bank.

A growing number of Israelis, though, are expressing exasperation with the peace process. After the blast, demonstrators threw stones at Police Minister Moshe Shahal as he arrived to inspect the bombing site. Israeli security forces later arrested two Hamas militants suspected of planning the attack, as well as 30 other people believed to be involved. But the man suspected of training the attackers, Yahya Ayyash, Hamas's top bomb maker, remained at large.

ABC surrenders

In one of the costliest libel settlements in U.S. history, the ABC television network apologized for claiming that Philip Morris Cos. and R. J. Reynolds, two major tobacco firms, routinely manipulate nicotine levels in cigarettes to addict smokers. Anti-smoking activists and defenders of free speech decried the network's decision, accusing ABC of unwarranted capitulation. Philip Morris took out full-page ads in major U.S. newspapers, headed "Apology accepted." In March, 1994, the ABC News program *Day One* reported that cigarette companies "spiked" their products by adding nicotine in the manufacturing process. Last week ABC agreed to pay the two companies' legal expenses, which could exceed $4 million. Philip Morris had originally filed suit against the network for $14 billion.

SPECIAL REPORT

CHINA

CHINA'S CHALLENGE

With 1.2 billion potential consumers and one of the world's fastest growing economies, China is an irresistible target for many overseas entrepreneurs—Canadians included. But how secure is China's economic future? On the political front, there is widespread concern over the impending death of the country's most powerful leader, Deng Xiaoping, who was reported to be in good health for his 91st birthday last week, but who has not appeared in public since early 1994. Less well publicized are the many environmental problems that threaten China's boom. Thomas Homer-Dixon, director of the peace and conflict studies program at the University of Toronto, and a widely quoted authority on the economic and political consequences of environmental change, recently spent three weeks in China, travelling 2,000 km by train through five provinces. In the following essay, he warns that China's long-term stability rests on its leaders' ability to cope with a breathtaking array of resource shortages, population pressures and environmental stresses—and that failure could have alarming consequences both for China and the world.



Homer-Dixon

Strolling along Shanghai's waterfront late on a misty summer evening, it is easy to be intoxicated by China. The newly rebuilt promenade—the Bund—on the bank of the Huangpu River is crowded with well-dressed young Chinese out for a walk. Facing the river is an arc of financial buildings and hotels constructed by Europeans in the early part of the century, each splendidly floodlit. And rising out of the Pudong Special Economic Zone across the river is a symbol of the new Shanghai. Looking like something created by the fevered imagination of a science-fiction writer, the Oriental Pearl TV Tower thrusts hundreds of feet into the sky, its two huge spheres sparkling with colored lights.

Shanghai is exploding with energy. It vibrates, gleams, and seethes with entrepreneurial exuberance. The city is an end-to-end construction zone, a non-stop medley of cranes, jackhammers and bulldozers creating skyscrapers, elevated expressways, subway tunnels and luxury apartment buildings. Shanghai boasts some of the most impressive architecture in Asia, with glass-faced hotels and office buildings, swathed in scaffolding, shooting skyward. Billboards and banners plaster the shopping district, advertising everything from blue jeans and diapers to hot-water heaters and American whisky.

Much of urban China, especially in the coastal zones, looks the same. From the top of the 14th-century city gate in the provincial capital of Nanjing, one can see 33 heavy-construction cranes within a radius of five kilometres. Looking down from the gate, roads are being widened, trees felled, and sewer and water pipelines installed. The streets of Nanjing, Zhengzhou and Beijing are lined with new private stalls and stores. Brightly lit shopping malls and arcades are full of every imaginable consumer product. Roads are choked with late-model Audis, Jeep Cherokees, Volkswagens, Volvos and Mercedes.

But this is only one facet of the Chinese reality, an urban facet experienced and emphasized by foreign tourists, business travellers and financial commentators. What foreigners rarely see is rural China, where 70 per cent of the Chinese population—more than 800 million people—still live, and where more than 50 per cent still rely on agriculture for their livelihood. A visitor can glimpse rural China by taking the train overland and by travelling "hard seat"—third class—with the peasants who are moving from village, to town, to coastal city. Rural China is a radically different world.

It is true that recent market reforms have penetrated deep into the Chinese countryside. Agriculture has been largely privatized: small farmers now control their own land and are better able to decide what to plant and where and when to sell. Towns and villages are bustling with new private and semi-private enterprises that make bricks, build houses, repair machines and transport goods. In fact, some analysts argue that the fastest economic growth in China is taking place in these rural communities. The effect of economic liberalization on peasant and rural incomes has been striking: between 1980 and 1990 farmers' average real wages increased by 75 per cent.

Yet, as the train grinds its way uphill from China's great northern plain into the Taihang Shan Mountains in Shanxi province, it is starkly obvious that China still has far to go before it can even begin to resemble a developed country. Villages become poorer as the rail line winds upward along the river gorge. Their dirt streets are strewn with garbage and rubble, the houses are ramshackle, made of mud or rough-cut stone, with slate, thatch or corrugated iron roofs, motorized vehicles, even scooters, almost disappear from the scene. The







Oriental Pearl TV Tower on the banks of the Huangpu River in Shanghai; among over Beijing (right); young Chinese relaxing by the Shanghai waterfront (far left): despite recent growth, China still has far to go before it can even begin to resemble a developed country

PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS HOMER-DIXON

ochre-and-tan hillsides have been stripped bare of trees for fuel, and grazed down to dirt by sheep and goats. Only patches of scrub and brush survive.

The population densities are too high for subsistence farming in this region. In an endless struggle for land to grow their corn and wheat, farmers have carved thousands of terraces into the steep slopes. Some terraces are tiny—no more than a couple of metres wide, winding along the edge of a steep hill or beside a creek—and the dirt is often rocky and dry. This is the Loess plateau, a deep soil formation that stretches across much of north-central China. Water erosion during summer storms is worsened by the loss of trees. Erosion has carved gullies tens of yards deep, creating eerie mesas and canyons reminiscent of the American badlands. The streams and rivers are thick with silt.

The effort and ingenuity needed to feed 1.2 billion people is astonishing. The entire Chinese landscape seems to have been domesticated—turned into wheat farms, rice paddies, orchards, woodlots and grazing land. Although summer harvesting of wheat on the plains is now largely mechanized, much farming is still done by human and animal muscle power. In Anhui province near the coast, water buffaloes still turn the soil, and each of hundreds of millions of rice seedlings is still pushed into the mud by hand. At dusk, as the train streaks by, the landscape is dotted with thousands of farmers stooped in their fields, hoeing, weeding and planting.

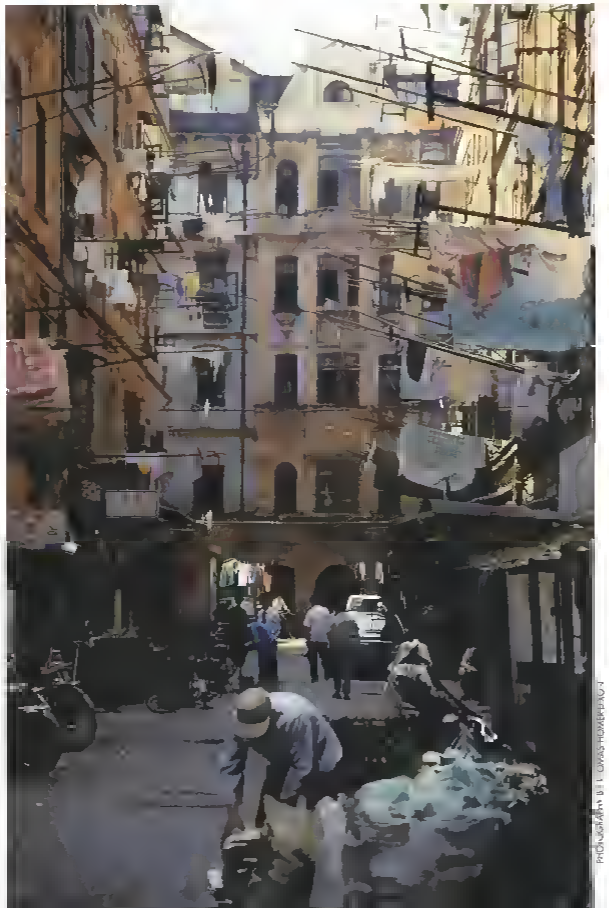
For anyone trying to make sense of today's China, travelling through the country can be a bewildering experience: there is abundant evidence to support practically any perspective. Optimists point to the unleashed consumerism and the construction boom in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. Pessimists point to the near-total absence of meaningful discussion of political liberalization and human rights, and to the rigidity of the country's aging leadership. But one thing missing from most commentary, whether optimistic or pessimistic, is a thoughtful appraisal of the ecological stress China faces.

The optimistic position is well-represented by William Overholt's recent book, *China: The Next Economic Superpower*. A consultant and senior financial manager in Hong Kong with immense experience in China, Overholt argues persuasively that little can derail China's boom. The central and provincial regimes in China are, for the most part, astutely managing the complex transition from socialism to capitalism, carefully staging price liberalization, privatization and the creation of strong financial institutions and markets. The economic crisis produced by Mao's Great Leap Forward in the late 1950s, and the chaos of the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s and 1970s, utterly discredited radical leftism for most Chinese society. As a result, Overholt says, the coalition supporting economic reform is deep and broad, encompassing farmers, urban workers, factory managers, bureaucrats, the army and most of the political elite. No one wants to return to the misery of the old days.

Overholt believes that this economic liberalization must precede political democratization. During the stress of rapid economic transition, when tough decisions have to be made that cut against the interests of powerful social groups, unbridled democracy can be fatal. "Democracy maximizes the power of those interest groups, particularly elite groups, who have the money and education to resist reforms," he writes. "The confrontation of powerful interest groups and weak government results in inflation, mismanagement and disorder."

Rather than worry about democracy, Overholt maintains, China must first move forward on economic reform. Since this reform will tread on many powerful toes, it demands a relatively authoritarian central government. But economic success will eventually build a large middle class, he says. It will also strengthen the consensus among diverse groups that further reform and social and political stability are essential. Overholt concedes that the current Chinese leadership is not interested in any form of real democracy, but he argues it will come with time, as it has in South Korea and Taiwan. Economic liberalization loosens the regime's hold on society while increasing contact with foreign ideas and raising education levels. "Democracy has a chance," Overholt concludes, "when economic growth has given the citizenry the confidence to demand accountability, the resources to impose these demands, and the education to make appropriate choices."





Farmer working in a field in the Loess plateau in north-central China (right); a crowded Shanghai neighborhood (below): the effort and ingenuity needed to feed 1.2 billion people is astonishing—the entire Chinese landscape seems to have been domesticated

The country seems to have a razor-thin margin for error when it comes to basics such as energy, food and water



Trucks carrying coal from Shanxi province: day and night, the line extends bumper to bumper for almost 100 km

Much of what Overholt says rings true, but it is striking that he makes only passing mention of China's enormous and still growing population. And nowhere does he discuss the critical environmental problems affecting the country. Despite harsh population control measures, in the next 10 years China will add the equivalent of six Canadas to its population. The combination of rapid population and economic growth is producing a range of environmental crises. Air pollution is often extreme: large cities seem to sit under a permanent bubble of smog, with visibility often dropping to less than a kilometre in Beijing and Shanghai, two cities that rank among the five most polluted in the world.

Water shortages in much of northern and western China hinder economic growth. In 1992, the great Yellow River, still referred to as the "sorrow of China" because of its catastrophic floods in years past, was dry at its mouth more than three months due to upstream withdrawals. The aquifers under Beijing supply 50 per cent of the city's water, but their water levels are falling by a metre a year, causing the ground to sink throughout the region as groundwater is extracted. The central government has responded by announcing plans to build a giant canal to move 15 billion tons of water annually from a tributary of the Yangtze River in the south to Beijing, a distance of almost 1,400 km. If built, this canal will be one of the great engineering feats of human history, cutting across hundreds of geological formations, streams and rivers; the current plan is to construct an eight kilometre siphon to suck the water under and past the Yellow River.

But the project is enormously contentious within China. "All of the provinces along the route of the diversion scheme are upset about it," said a senior technical planner in Beijing, adding that the canal and associated reservoirs would displace more than 400,000 people. "There is currently no agreement among the provinces on management of the canal, and management is important and difficult because canal breaks could be very dangerous to communities along the route."

The industrial city of Taiyuan, the capital of the central province of Shanxi, is a microcosm of the challenges faced by China's resource managers. Situated in a valley surrounded by mountains that are rich with coal, Taiyuan is an important and rapidly growing producer of steel and chemicals. Long ago, the city's demand for water for industries, homes and agriculture outstripped the supply of the local Fen River, requiring ever-higher extractions of groundwater from wells. As in Beijing, the water table is dropping rapidly. A large spring in the valley used for irrigation, a site marked by one of China's best-known Buddhist temples, has almost gone dry. To make matters worse, the city and its industries produce hundreds of thousands of tons of heavily polluted waste water each day, much of which is dumped into the Fen untreated or only minimally treated.

Because agricultural land is so scarce in the region, as throughout China, Taiyuan cannot afford to stop irrigating the rice, wheat and vegetable fields in the valley. But Fen River water is increasingly laden with dangerous chemicals and salts, most seriously cancer-causing benzene. Local water managers acknowledge that the use of Fen water is slowly ruining the valley's soil, poisoning its crops and lowering agricultural yields. The only solution is to dilute the river water with groundwater, but this resource is already overtaxed. The managers must therefore make a dreadful tradeoff between further damaging the valley's soil and food production and maintaining water supplies to the city's industries and homes.

Senior officials in Taiyuan readily acknowledge the severity of their water problems. "Summer water shortages are very serious," said one administrator, a senior water engineer. "Some industries must be closed to maintain residential supply." But all the potential solutions—more conservation and recycling, and pumping water 150 km from the already depleted Yellow River—demand new technologies and large amounts of capital. "We need funds and expertise from foreign countries," the engineer implored. "Otherwise, water scarcity will be a strict constraint on development in the region."

Water scarcity is only one of a host of ever more tangled resource problems in China. At about a thousand square metres per capita, cropland availability is among the lowest in the developing world. Several hundred thousand acres of farmland are lost every year to erosion, salinization and urban expansion. The rich rice fields around Beijing are being gobbled up by new developments of Spanish-style villas that look like they belong in La Jolla, Calif. Near many towns and cities are new Special Economic Zones—industrial parks that offer tax and service advantages to foreign investors—sprawling across good farmland. Each new auto-assembly plant, poultry-processing site or paint factory takes a chunk of desperately needed farmland. When these losses are combined with population growth, the amount of cropland per person is falling steadily by 1.5 per cent a year.

Unlike most foreign commentators, Chinese officials are well aware of these environmental and resource issues. The semi-official English language *China Daily* publishes one or more articles every day about cropland shortages, water scarcity, reforestation programs or air pollution. Of critical concern is whether China can continue its policy of food self-sufficiency. On one hand, diminishing reserves of cropland and rapidly rising demand for grain-dependent livestock are pressuring China to buy large quantities of grain from other countries, including

Canada. And the country's new wealth should allow it to buy this grain without significant economic disruption. Indeed, in 1994, foreign purchases shot up when grain output fell by 2.5 per cent.

On the other hand, if China becomes too dependent on foreign supplies, it puts itself at risk of political and economic coercion by foreigners; the Chinese often raise the example of the U.S. grain embargo against the Soviets after the Afghan invasion. And there are doubts about whether international markets will be able to sustain repeated major purchases by the Chinese. The country consumes a whopping 350 million tons of grain a year. A shortfall of a mere 15 per cent—50 million tons—would amount to about a quarter of the world's total current annual grain exports.

Two other clear impediments to further development are overloaded infrastructure and inadequate energy supplies. On rural highways, traffic jams often last for days, and rail workers fret about pressure to maintain dangerously high densities of traffic on rail lines. In north-central China the main energy source is coal, with the provinces of Shanxi and Henan alone sitting on reserves estimated at 300 billion tons. Literally hundreds of coal mines punctuate the landscape, mountains of coal sit in storage depots, and the gushing smokestacks of coal-burning factories and power plants often march as far as one can see into the smoky haze.

Getting the coal to where it can be burnt is now a formidable task. Two rail lines descend from the mountains of Shanxi province to the northern plain of China. These lines carry a steady stream of coal trains, but they are still not enough. In addition, the mountain highway from Shouyang down to the plain is plugged by a crawling line of large dump trucks brimming with coal day and night, the line extends bumper to bumper for almost 100 km.

Of course, none of this evidence makes it possible to offer any firm predictions about China's future. The society and its economy are simply too complex and too poorly understood, and there are too many key political issues that remain unresolved, to know exactly what trajectory the country will follow. While some of Overholt's optimism about the future is justified, there are reasons for caution, too.

China has embarked on an economic and social transition that is almost unimaginably complicated. Literally millions of urgent problems—some minor and some daunting—must be addressed immediately as China develops at breakneck speed. Given the country's vast population, this transition will be far more difficult than that of South Korea or Taiwan, two countries optimists often point to as exemplars. The management demands on the central, provincial and local Chinese governments are breathtaking.

Resource scarcities, environmental problems and continued population growth make this transition harder in many ways. They increase wealth gaps between the cosmopolitan coast and the more conservative interior regions, which are often severely affected by water and cropland scarcity. This widening gap has spurred a migration of people—often estimated at 100 million—from interior rural areas to the coastal cities in search of economic opportunity. One of history's great migrations, this movement has gone largely unremarked in the West, yet a visitor sees its evidence everywhere.

The Zhengzhou train station is an important rail junction in central China. Its halls, corridors and stairwells teem with weathered and dishevelled peasants from the countryside on their way to the city. Thousands of them sit in clusters in the station's sweltering plaza, sometimes waiting for days for their connecting trains. In big cities, construction sites are lined with the tents and shacks of workers from rural areas; in Shanghai alone, more than a million newcomers live on construction sites, moving from one to another as work demands. The flood of rural migrants has produced a jump in crime and a widely remarked drop in cleanliness and hygiene in the big cities.

Resource shortages exacerbate wealth gaps not only between regions, but also between rich and poor people within regions. Shortages of land and water increase opportunities for powerful members of China's elite—often well-connected members of the Communist party or their offspring, known in China as "the princelings"—to gain windfall profits through speculation. Overholt describes the nepotism that has accompanied China's recent economic development as "a particularly corrupt form of neo-feudalism."

Environmental problems and population growth boost the already huge capital demands faced by the state and the economy. New dams and canals have to be built to store scarce water and move it around, cheap housing is needed for rural-urban migrants, and agricultural stations and research laboratories need funding to increase food output. Yet, between 1978 and 1994, central and local government revenues as a percentage of GDP fell by almost two-thirds, the figure for central government revenue alone—at a mere 3.9 per cent in 1994—was among the lowest in the world. As a result, rooms full of advanced equipment sit idle in leading research laboratories while scientists read books for lack of research funds. Meanwhile, in the private sector, too much capital is being channelled into high-margin luxury shopping centres, condominiums and villas in cities like Shanghai.

Finally, resource and environmental stresses increase the susceptibility of the Chinese economy and society to sudden shocks like droughts, floods and sharp changes in the international economy. The country seems to have a razor-thin margin for error when it comes to basics such as energy, food and water. For instance, the leadership, media, and general public are acutely aware of national food production. The slight shortfall in grain production in 1994 pushed up inflation, in June of this year, the country seemed to breathe a sigh of relief when farmers reported a bumper wheat harvest. Serious resource scarcities and population pressures mean there is little slack in the system to keep the effects of sudden, unanticipated shocks from reverberating through the economy and society.

These three problems—rising wealth differentials, capital shortfalls and susceptibility to shocks—are not necessarily unmanageable. But they demand strong, competent and resilient government at all levels of society. Unfortunately, the national government today lacks robust moral authority among the Chinese public. A high degree of moral authority—or "legitimacy," as political scientists like to call it—is key to the country's long-term stability.

It is true that the Communist party has a deep reservoir of support, based on its record of unifying China, ensuring that the country is respected around the world, and guaranteeing the basics of life to its people. Yet, Communist ideology no longer serves as a moral glue, in the wake of the Cultural Revolution it attracts virtually no support. Moreover, the crackdown following the Tiananmen massacre halted the evolution of alternative political institutions that might have formed the foundation for a newly legitimized state. Debate over central political questions—the rate of democratization, the nature of representation and the like—has been suspended at least until Deng Xiaoping dies, and probably for much longer.

In this vacuum, the legitimacy of China's national government now largely rests on two pillars: continual economic growth and nationalism. The nationalism, in turn, centres on a cluster of issues, including Chinese dominion over Hong Kong, Taiwan and the tiny Spratly Islands in the South China Sea—an archipelago 1,000 miles south of Hong Kong—where China's claims of sovereignty clash with those of the Philippines, Vietnam and Malaysia, among others. Chinese officialdom's obsession with these issues is often astonishing. In Tiananmen Square, a five-storey digital clock counts the seconds until July 1, 1997, the day on which Hong Kong is scheduled to be "liberated" from British rule.

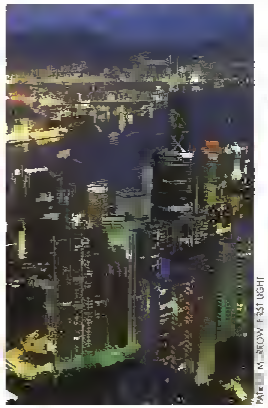
Even a brief slackening of economic growth would accentuate the underlying stresses posed by increasing wealth differentials and capital shortfalls. During the delicate transition period, marginal groups—such as poor farmers, rural-urban migrants and workers in state industries that are being streamlined—are especially vulnerable. The Chinese state is losing the ability to guarantee an "iron rice bowl," or bottom-line social security, for the weakest members of its population. Yet, the Chinese labor force grows relentlessly by 10 million people a year. If the economy falters, the potential for urban and rural unrest could encourage a regime struggling for legitimacy to retreat to ever more aggressive nationalism.

Canada and other industrialized countries all have a stake in the success of the grand Chinese experiment with liberalization. If the experiment fails, the economic and political consequences could be horrendous. But despite the detailed and often excellent analysis of Chinese prospects that can be found in Western media, little attention is given to the ecological dilemmas the country faces. In a land of scarce resources and a still-expanding population, rapid economic growth is essential. But this rapid growth itself often worsens the country's underlying resource scarcities and environmental problems—and these problems, in turn, threaten growth. Whether and how China breaks out of this vicious cycle will shape human history for decades, if not centuries, to come. □



THOMAS HOMER-DIXON

Rural migrants waiting at Zhengzhou train station for transit to coastal centres; Deng Xiaoping and wife Zhao Lin (below): debate over central political questions has been suspended



PAUL M. WALSH / TSI (TOP RIGHT)

Widening income gaps have spurred a mass migration from interior rural areas to the coastal cities



REUTERS



THOMAS HOMER-DIXON

Hong Kong skyline; digital clock in Beijing's Tiananmen Square counting down the seconds to the British colony's 'liberation' in 1997 (left): nationalist obsession

DEALING IN DRUGS

Canada's hot biotech sector is looking attractive to the world's giant drug companies

A photograph of Albert Einstein hangs on the wall above Francesco Bellini's desk. Beneath the picture is a quote from the legendary physicist. "Great Spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds.' Over the years, that statement has sustained Bellini as he built Montreal based BioChem Pharma Inc. into one of Canada's leading biotechnology companies. But Bellini now finds himself threatened by nervous multinational drug companies—who are devouring one another at a ferocious rate in an attempt to gain new products and market share. In fact, last week, Michigan-based The Upjohn Co. and Sweden's Pharmacia AB became the latest pharmaceutical giants to merge when they announced an $18-billion deal. And in the wake of their union, analysts said Glaxo Wellcome PLC, the world's largest drug company, may soon offer $2.8 billion for BioChem and its breakthrough products, which include the potentially lucrative anti-AIDS drug 3TC. That would make Bellini, who arrived in Canada from Italy in 1967 with little more than his diploma in chemistry, exceedingly rich. But it would also cause him to lose control of the company he founded. Said Bellini: "It sure would be a shame to be taken over."

The continuing upheaval in the pharmaceutical sector—of which Glaxo's rumored raid is only the latest sign—has sent a clear message to the 65 firms in Canada's red-hot biotech sector: now that some of their revolutionary products are nearing the marketplace, they have become attractive takeover targets. And there is no shortage of miracle drugs under development in the industry, a classic high-risk, high-reward field. In Vancouver, Xillix Technologies is developing equipment that can detect the earliest traces of cancer. In another part of the city, QLT PhotoTherapeutics Inc. is perfecting cancer-fighting agents that can be triggered by lasers. At Biomira Inc.'s laboratories in Edmonton, scientists say they hope to produce the ultimate magic bullet: a cancer vaccine. And Toronto-based Allelix Biopharmaceuticals Inc. hopes soon to market its revolutionary anti-AIDS and osteoporosis drugs. Industry leaders have taken note, and have already bought into many of Canada's top biotech firms. "We're getting approval from around the world for our products," said QLT president Randal Chase. He added that his firm is close to signing a major partnership agreement with a multinational. "The large drug companies are expressing a confidence in the sector."



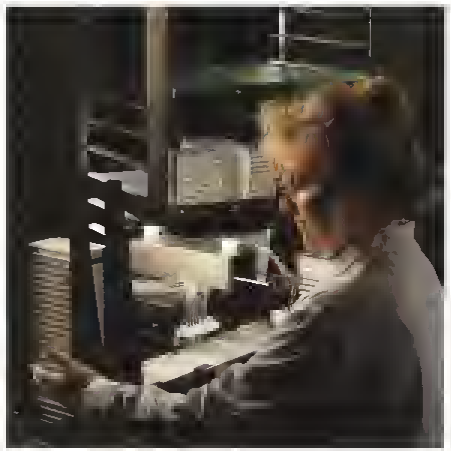
QLT's Chase: making wonder drugs

Producing new wonder drugs, however, can cost hundreds of millions of dollars. To reduce the risk of failure, the industry is rapidly consolidating. And according to a report released last week by the Canadian Drug Manufacturers Association, over the past two years mergers in the industry have eliminated up to 2,000 Canadian jobs. During that period, drug companies spent more than $90 billion internationally to acquire their rivals in takeovers. In one power play alone in March, Glaxo spent $20 billion to acquire Wellcome PLC. And last week, Upjohn and Pharmacia used a share swap to create one of the largest drug companies in the world, with $9.2 billion in revenues. By combining their resources, drug companies like the newly formed Pharmacia & Upjohn Inc. are able to gain a beachhead in each other's home markets. But even as the giants merge, analysts say, they face pressure to pursue smaller firms in the hope of finding a lucrative breakthrough drug. "As these companies get larger and larger," said Allelix president Graham Strachan, "it gets much more difficult for them to maintain innovation, so they are moving to the small companies to provide scientific leads."

The search for new scientific leads has triggered a boom in Canadian biotech stocks. In fact, the Toronto Stock Exchange's biotech index has risen more than 84 per cent over the past six months alone, pushing the market value of the firms in the sector to almost $6 billion from $5 billion. Despite the rapid increase, Michael James, an analyst who follows Canadian biotech stocks for Dlouhy Investments Inc. in Montreal, said the stock prices of many companies still do not reflect the potential value of the new drugs they are developing. "It now makes sense to buy these companies," said James. "These guys have done years of good quality work and are getting close to commercialization."

Like Bellini, an organic chemist, many of the scientists who made the jump from the research lab to the boardroom are determined to see their new products to market. Bellini, the son of an Italian laborer, worked as a chemist at Ayerst Labs in Montreal in the 1970s and has some 20 drug patents to his name, including Tolrestat, a popular diabetes drug. In 1984, when Ayerst relocated to the United States, he jumped to a biological research group affiliated with the University of Quebec. The group had developed a number of new chemical compounds—including 3TC, a treatment that could prolong the lives of people suffering from AIDS, which BioChem has since refined and hopes to begin selling this fall. Bellini owns 1.4 million shares in BioChem, a three per cent stake in the company that is worth $54 million. Although he now spends most of his time on BioChem's business operations, Bellini said he still likes to visit the company's labs to talk to his scientists. He says his main preoccupation is ensuring that BioChem, which now employs almost 1,000 people, always has new drugs under development. Said Bellini: "For a biotech company to be viable, it must always have a pipeline of new products."

Keeping the pipeline full is expensive. According to Bellini, it often costs more than $500 million to develop a new drug. And to compete successfully, Canadian research laboratories must not only come up with outstanding products, they must also gain access to foreign markets by forging links with multinational drug companies. "Small companies," said Bellini, "cannot succeed without being affiliated with these giants."



Testing pills: 'It would be a shame to be taken over'

BioChem's giant, Glaxo, currently owns 16.2 per cent of the firm, and offers it much more than research money. It also lends the critical expertise required to move the drug through the regulatory process in Canada, the United States and Europe. Once the drug has cleared those hurdles, it can also be marketed worldwide through Glaxo's distribution network. "You have to reach the global market," said Bellini. "If you're a small company, you need a large partner to rely on."

The stock market also puts pressure on firms in the biotech sector to take on multinational partners before it rewards them with a higher share prices. BioChem shares moved up $3.75 to close at $43 after it was revealed that Glaxo was about to make an offer for the Montreal firm. (The shares later slipped, in part on news of disappointing trials of a hepatitis drug, and closed last week at $37.87.) Now, investors are closely tracking the Canadian market to determine who will be the next high flyer to find a powerful suitor. Many analysts believe it will be QLT. "It is expected and it is required," said James. "The market is waiting for that to happen." But not every investor wants the attention. For their part, BioChem's shareholders approved a rights plan in June that could make the firm more difficult to take over. The plan would give the company breathing room by allowing it 60 days to counter any takeover offer. Still, analysts say that if Glaxo launches a determined bid, BioChem will be quickly swallowed. "If 3TC is going to be a blockbuster, Glaxo's interest is understandable," said Franc Gregori, an analyst at research firm, Paribas Capital Markets in London.

Even if Glaxo does not take over BioChem, analysts say, the rumors of such a buyout can only have a positive effect on Canada's biotech market. James said that Glaxo's interest will signal to skeptics that there is money to be made in Canadian laboratories. "These companies have tremendous value," said James. "An acquisition would encourage investors to be more aggressive in investing in some of these companies."

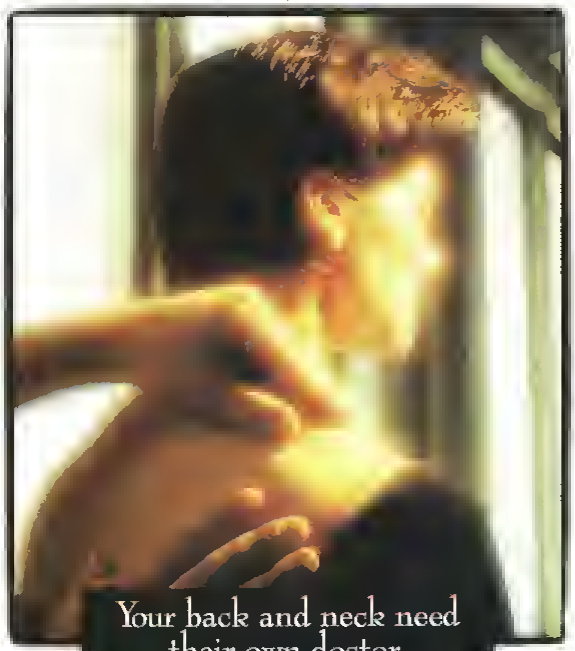
For innovative scientists like Bellini, the growing presence of multinationals is a mixed blessing. While some of the industry's pioneers will inevitably lose control of their companies, they also could become fabulously wealthy by selling their shares. For their part, biotech executives say that in the end it is the shareholders who will vote on whether to accept a takeover offer. Said QLT's Chase: "If a deal comes along that is in the best interests of the shareholders, you have to support it. And they will have the ultimate choice."

Spokesmen for the major drug companies, meanwhile, say that their alliances with biotech companies lend credibility to the sector. Said Judy Erola, a former federal Liberal cabinet minister who is now president of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association of Canada: "It is an indication that our biotechnology sector is coming into its own."

Certainly the trend to consolidation does not signal the end of the Canadian biotech sector. Chase noted that most of the big companies realize that research firms have to operate with a degree of independence. Said Chase: "There is certainly a feeling that you have to give research companies as much latitude as possible, because that is what creates the most innovation." And innovative products are precisely what the drug giants are hoping to find in Canadian laboratories.

TOM FENNELL

Your back and neck hurt With every step, reach twist, lift and bend the pain stops you in your tracks Or perhaps it comes and goes Either way, like millions of Canadians you've probably gone to great lengths to find relief But there's one place you may not have looked Your Chiropractor's office Now before you jump to conclusions about Chiropractors, we'd like to set the record straight on their education, experience and philosophy After all, over 120,000 Canadians just like you visit a Chiropractor every day and find relief Perhaps it's your turn After all, you've got nothing to lose but that pain in your back or neck.



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Chiropractors are doctors Officially their title is Doctor of Chiropractic, which, although very impressive-sounding, isn't terribly easy to say So we'll refer to them simply as Chiropractors

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Chiropractic training doesn't stop at the end of a textbook. Far from it. Before receiving their Doctor designation, Chiropractic students undergo an intensive and closely supervised Internship program at a Chiropractic College Clinic This is their true training ground the place where they gain and perfect valuable hands-on healing skills After years of study, Chiropractic students must pass rigorous National Board and Provincial Licensing Board examinations. That, in a nutshell, is the making of a Chiropractor

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Cambior's Omai mine: Guyana declared it an environmental disaster

The big spill

A Canadian gold mine battles a cyanide leak

Cyanide, by some eerie coincidence, has become the odd link between two startling events in Guyana, the small South American country that borders Venezuela and Brazil. Cyanide was the poison used by cult leader Rev Jim Jones to kill more than 900 of his followers in the Guyana jungle in 1978. And last week, it was cyanide from a Canadian-owned gold mine that spilled into the country's largest river and caused Guyanese President Cheddi Jagan to declare an environmental disaster near the mine site at Omai, deep in the jungle "It's an unfortunate coincidence," said Louis Gignac, president of Cambior Inc., the Montreal based company that controls the mine Last week, Gignac was in Omai supervising efforts to contain the spill, which came from a dam holding cyanide laced waste water, and to repair damage to the mine, the rivers—and the company's reputation "We think the worst is over," said Gignac from Guyana. "But we're still in shock. The dam was designed to last forever This is the last thing we ever expected."

Meanwhile, about 20,000 people who live downstream from the mine and who depend on Guyana's Omai and Essequibo rivers for water and food were waiting to see what damage the cyanide spill would cause As of late last week, there were no human deaths or illnesses reported but there were reports of fish deaths The Guyana government was urging people not to drink water or eat fish from the river and was attempting to deliver safe water supplies to communities on the river About 100 km north of Omai, in Bartica, the largest settlement on the river with a population of 16,000, the river water which had been clean, had turned opaque and rust colored by Aug 23 The *Stabroek News* of Georgetown, Guyana's capital, reported sightings of a few dead fish Stella Louis, a resident of the nearby village of Ampa Bay, said she saw a slight discoloration in the river "I am still bathing and washing with it," Louis said, "but I don't wash my mouth or cook with it."

Although cyanide is used to leach gold particles out of ore in most of gold mines currently operating around the world, major spills like the one in Guyana are rare. In Omai, the Cambior mine's problems began shortly before midnight on Aug 19 when a rock and earth dam that holds a reservoir of water, waste rock and cyanide that had been used in the extraction process cracked open Water that the company said contained as much as 30 parts per million of cyanide began spilling into the Omai River which eventually flows into the Essequibo The Canadian drinking water standard calls for no more than 0 2 parts per million of cyanide Gignac said ongoing monitoring of cyanide presence at several points indicated that the levels were quickly being diluted by river water and that, even close to the mine, the cyanide levels were down to less than half the allowable limit for drinking Cyanide in fact breaks down rapidly when exposed to oxy-

NEW

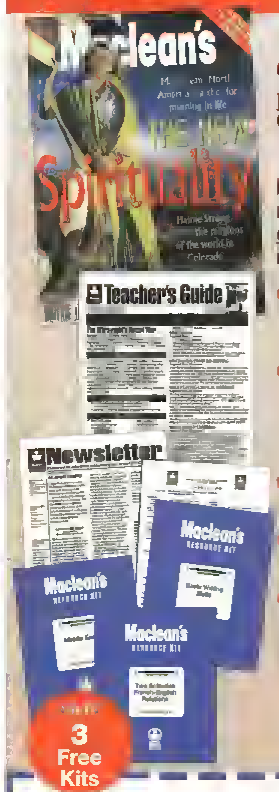
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gen and the sun's ultraviolet light, and is not thought to cause cumulative environmental damage. The Omai mine is now shut down because the damage-control team had to use the main pit as an emergency reservoir for contaminated water. Gignac said it will not reopen for at least three months.

Cyanide leaks have occurred at other mines. In Canada, a spill at the Carolin gold mine killed some fish in Ladner Creek, near Hope, B.C., in 1983, prompting the province to introduce stiffer rules for the use of cyanide in mines. In Colorado, the Summitville mine, owned by Vancouver-based Galactic Resources Inc., leaked cyanide for several years before the mine closed in 1992 and the company went bankrupt. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates it will cost $140 million to clean up Summitville.

Reports of the spill caused Cambior's stock to drop more than $4 to $14.25 as investors reacted to the loss of the Omai mine's gold output. Cambior, which grew significantly in 1986 when the Quebec government sold some of its state-owned mining assets to the company, had expected that the mine would account for 45 per cent of its projected 1995 production of 550,000 ounces of gold.

In Guyana, Gignac says that Cambior has a team of experts working on the spill, including representatives from two Canadian companies, Knight Piesold and Co., who designed the damaged reservoir, and Golder Associates of Toronto, which assisted on parts of the project. Gignac says the cause of the dam failure will be investigated by teams of experts for both Cambior and the Guyanese government. "We have no idea what went wrong," he said. "We just look at it and shake our heads." Gignac said that the mine met Canadian standards. "We didn't use different standards because we were in Guyana."

But chemical engineer Tom Higgs, of Vancouver-based Process Research Associates Ltd., speculated that one possible explanation for the dam failure might be the way the dam was constructed. "I've seen instances where the design was fine," said Higgs, who has never had any involvement with the Omai mine, "but then they turned it over to a contractor who is just a dirt mover and he doesn't bother to make sure that the proper materials are used in the way that the design describes."

For now the Guyanese government is more concerned with delivering drinking water and assessing the economic fall-out. The Cambior mine provides 20 per cent of Guyana's gross domestic product and is one of the country's largest employers. Said Edward Shields, executive secretary of the Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners Association in Georgetown: "At the end of the day when all the assessments are done, I believe that this will be seen as a catastrophe for the economy, not the environment."

BRENDA DALGLISH

Merger meltdown



THE BOTTOM LINE

BY DEIRDRE McMURDY

The mergers and acquisitions game has finally gone too far. In the holy name of "strategic positioning," billions of dollars in corporate assets are being flung about at a dizzying pace. But now, the top brass at Philip Morris, the New York City-based branded products behemoth, have pushed the feeding frenzy to its limit: they have delivered the caramel and marshmallow divisions of Kraft Foods into the hands of utter strangers. Even by the standards of bloodless multinational corporations, this is an act of shocking callousness.

After all, these are the traditional comfort foods of childhood. And both marshmallows and caramels are core ingredients for the entire jellied-salad school of North American cuisine. But so far, nothing has been disclosed about the miscellaneous band of "Texas and California investors" who have snapped up these valuable properties for an "undisclosed sum." All we know for certain is that caramel and marshmallow sales only brought in about $200 million last year, and that's just not enough for the managers at Philip Morris, makers of Marlboro cigarettes and Maxwell House coffee.

With all the recent mega-deals, there is a new chill creeping into the business sector

This is not to say a harsh word against competitiveness, productivity, paradigm shifts and the other management mantras of this decade. It's just that a rather clinical coldness is creeping into the increasingly big picture. The Mounties are in the hands of the Disney empire and are now demanding that Canadian children's authors apply for a licence to write about them. Jet-Puffed marshmallows are now the domain of an investment syndicate.

The exception to this rule, of course, resides in Calgary. There, the energy business is going through the same crush of mergers, acquisitions and rationalizations as every other sector is. But at least in the oilpatch, you can still find feisty guys like J.C. Anderson, while large, muscular companies everywhere are swallowing their smaller siblings in greedy gulps, J.C. is trying to take over $815-million Home Oil Ltd., a company that is significantly larger than his.

It's not very often that J.C. makes the trip to "Mecca" as he refers to Toronto and the concrete canyons of Bay Street. And even with his burly form squeezed into the requisite houndstooth suit and glossy fringed loafers, he definitely looks like a boots-and-big-belt buckle kind of guy. The impression that he is a refugee from the cast of *Dallas* was not dispelled at a recent presentation to Bay Street types where he bellowed a welcoming "Howdy" as slick-haired brokers glided into the room.

Without further ado, J.C. began to explain that he wants public shareholders to "stay in the saddle" while Anderson Exploration Ltd. makes its play for Home Oil. He assured the group that the takeover is "not some management ego trip" and he didn't "just fall off the turnip truck." In fact, he noted that he had been preparing a bid since March, when "the fox snuck into the henhouse." The fox, in this case, is Amoco Petroleum Co. Ltd., which offered $757 million in cash for Home in June. Both bids expire on Sept. 7, and the competition is fierce—if folksy.

As the deadline approaches, however, there is no doubt that J.C., despite his drawl and his alarming briefcase, which appears to be made from the hide of some endangered species, has carefully calculated which buttons to push. He vowed that, if given the chance to "bang the companies together," he would cut costs by ridding Home of its "air force" as well as closing its executive dining room.

The marketing of Anderson Exploration's bid is critical to its success. That is because Amoco is offering cash and J.C. is offering paper—1.38 shares of Anderson in exchange for every outstanding share of Home. And as his stock price fluctuates in daily trading, so does the value of his offer. That means J.C. must convince investors that he can add value—and spice—to Home Oil's assets. And that the upside he can create will be worth more in the long term than a mutt full of cash today.

But in the end, whether Anderson Exploration wins Home Oil or not, J.C. deserves honorable mention for bringing some badly needed spark and personal style to the recent round of corporate mega-deals. Now, if only a guy like that would consider branching out into the caramel and marshmallow business.

NEW

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Business NOTES



NOAM JETTE/CANADA WIDE

Windows 95 promotion at Toronto's CN Tower: a long-awaited launch

Maximum hype from Microsoft

It was an unprecedented advertising blitz. New York City threw spotlights in Microsoft Corp.'s corporate colors onto the Empire State Building. In London, the company gave the entire 1.5-million-copy print run of *The Times* newspaper to readers for free with multiple ad pages, in Toronto, a huge banner dangled from the CN Tower; and Jay Leno showed up at the Redmond, Wash., head office of Microsoft for the televised launch of Windows 95, an operating system for personal computers. The worldwide campaign is expected to cost Microsoft over $270 million, but pay off by stimulating demand for the computer hardware and software that consumers will use with Windows 95. Sales were well beyond expectations across Canada, according to Microsoft product manager Matthew Price. Retailers, he said "tell us that in the first day of sales, they exceeded expectations for the first two weeks of the launch." Industry experts say Microsoft programs are now in about five million Canadian computers, and they expect about 10 per cent of these machines, or 500,000 computers, could be updated with Windows 95. The launch, which was more than a year late, was welcome news for companies like Toronto-based Delrina Corp., which sells software that runs on Windows systems. Delrina said repeated delays in releasing Windows 95 kept consumers on the sidelines and led to a $6.3 million fourth-quarter loss.

Culture clash

Once again, the United States has Canada's culture in its sights. The U.S. government has informed Canada that it wants to put protection of cultural industries on the negotiating table when NAFTA is opened later this year to admit Chile. In addition to the controversial culture issue, the United States is also pushing for stronger rules governing its intellectual property rights, telecommunications and agriculture, all to help U.S. corporate interests. In a letter to Washington, the Canadian government objected strongly to the new U.S. tactic. "We on the Canadian side are of the view that these new U.S. proposals," said the letter, "are inappropriate, both in substance and in timing, and that they can only crowd out good policy—the accession of Chile to the NAFTA." Initially, trade ministers had predicted the talks could be finished by Christmas, but a push by the United States to reopen old issues could delay an agreement.

BACKING OFF

Canadian and U.S. officials said it was unlikely a one-year ceiling on Canadian wheat exports to the United States would be renewed when it expires on Sept. 11. Canada agreed to the ceiling after exceptionally high exports in 1993-1994, resulting in part from flooding in the United States. But this year, Canadian farmers have not met the reduced quota of 1.6 million tons, and Ottawa had been signalling its unwillingness to extend the agreement.

SURPRISING BANK PROFITS

The Bank of Montreal and the Toronto-Dominion Bank, the first two banks to report third-quarter financial results, turned in higher-than-expected profits. The Bank of Montreal made $264 million in the quarter, an increase of 53 per cent over the same period last year. The TD Bank's profit increased 39 per cent to a record $225 million. Analysts attributed the gains to upturns in many of the banks' businesses.

SATELLITE TV TROUBLES

A sobering report on the state of the U.S. satellite television industry suggests that Canada's two fledgling direct-to-home satellite television companies, Expressvu Inc. and Power DirecTV Inc. can expect tough competition from Canada's cable television industry. The U.S. study says satellite television faces problems with costs and their lack of local channels.

ONEX WINS ONE

Onex Corp., which lost a bid to take over John Labatt Ltd. in June, posted a profit on another takeover. Onex picked up $150 million last week when Lear Seating Corp. bought Automotive Industries Inc., 19 per cent owned by Onex. During a slump in the auto industry in 1990, Onex invested $23 million in Automotive Industries.

KIWI PEACEMAKER

New Zealand's ambassador to France, Christopher Beeby, will mediate Canada's battle with the United States over West Coast salmon. Beeby must sort out a dispute over fish that spawn in Canadian and U.S. streams and are caught in both nations' waters.

CEMENT FIXING

Lafarge Canada Inc. and St. Lawrence Cement Inc. each said that they are under investigation for suspected price-fixing in the ready-mix concrete business. The Bureau of Competition Policy is said to have 10 concrete suppliers under scrutiny. Michel Damphouse, a St. Lawrence vice-president, said the company is cooperating with the bureau.



Promoting the big mines of the world

BY PETER C. NEWMAN

Yorkton Securities, a Vancouver investment house, has its own operatives scouring the globe for 'elephant-size' mineral deposits

Ever since the Big Six banks absorbed the country's major investment houses, the few remaining independents have struggled to find a new mandate for themselves. Some have become boutique operations, catering to garlands of wealthy clients, others—like Bay Street's Gordon Capital—have specialized in block trades, while a few—such as Richardson Greenshields—have stayed alive by relying on their retail networks.

But faced with the undiminished clout of the bank-run institutions that now dominate stock trades, most of the remaining independents have moved to occupy niche markets, none more successfully than Vancouver's Yorkton Securities Inc., which has become the country's leading financial facilitator of the world's burgeoning mining industry. Yorkton, which is nominally headquartered in Toronto, is really run out of its Vancouver office, which houses the bulk of its 400 employees. The firm is currently financing the hunt for "elephant-size" mineral deposits in 35 countries, mainly though its overseas offices in Zurich, London, Paris and Santiago, Chile. Yorkton's Chairman Frank Giustra is based in Vancouver but, while he admires the Vancouver Stock Exchange as a source of venture capital, he has conscientiously stayed away from its seamier aspects. "The problem," he told me in an interview last week, "is not so much with policing its operations as with the way some brokerage companies conduct themselves. If they didn't allow questionable types of business to be transacted on the VSE, it wouldn't be there. It's as simple as that."

Giustra is obsessed with ensuring that Yorkton becomes recognized as a world leader in analyzing and underwriting mining stocks. The firm certainly operates in the big leagues, having raised $1 billion for mining companies worldwide in the past 2½ years. "We're everywhere except North America right now," he says, "because most of the big deposits have already been discovered here, so that if you want to bag an elephant you have to go to elephant country, which means going into one of the emerging economies. The best plays are in the Philippines, southern and western Africa, central and Southeast Asia and the Andean Cordillera, which stretches from Colombia down to Chile."

Chile has been in the lead to attract foreign investments, partly because of its favorable geology, but equally because of its "enlightened," (i.e. business-friendly) tax structure, environmental regulations, foreign investment policies and mining laws. "The Chilean government set the standard," says Giustra. "We all refer to the Chilean economic model and our firm has in fact been instrumental in bringing the representatives of other governments around to their way of thinking."

(That view of Chile as a favored jurisdiction is confirmed by Peter Munk, chairman of the giant Barrick Gold Corp., which is sinking billions into its newly acquired Chilean properties. "I believe it's better to invest in Chile at the moment than in North America," Munk told me recently. "Their attitude is similar to the kind of discipline as we had here in the 1950s, which is now completely lost. In this business, time is money, and in most Latin American countries you're welcomed instead of being looked at disparagingly as some kind of evil raper of the countryside.")

While Giustra heads Yorkton, none of the 75 shareholders (including Giustra) owns more than 10 percent of its shares. A good many of those are geologists, accountants, economists and corporate finance specialists who spend their professional lives earning for Yorkton what the firm's chairman describes as "our franchise as the brokerage world's best and largest natural resource group." Instead of waiting around for prospectors to arrive with big dreams and small claims, the Yorkton operatives dispatch due diligence teams to some pretty obscure corners, searching for new mines. "Just once," complains Giustra, "just once, I wish somebody would discover a deposit in Tuscany or the French Riviera. We seem to be always finding mines in the most bizarre places." Tony Williams, the capable geologist who heads Yorkton's London office, for example, is in the process of putting a complicated but potentially promising gold-mining deal together deep in the heart of Kazakhstan, one of the more obscure former Soviet republics.

In the hunt for big-game deposits, Yorkton often invests in local infrastructure as an incentive to negotiating permits from indigenous governments. Recent contributions have included funding a medical clinic in an Ecuadorian jungle. At the money end of the Yorkton operation, the firm now has a loyal following among this continent's leading institutional investors, and an expanding list of European clients who follow its mining plays.

One of the reasons for the firm's success may be that future prospects are seldom exaggerated. "We warn investors that we try to win six out of every 10 times we do a deal, and we've been pretty successful at that, but there are no sure bets in this business," says Bob Cross, a former Gordon Capital corporate finance executive who joined Yorkton as president recently. Ian Lamont, who writes an eccentric London newsletter for Yorkton, put the issue more directly, if less elegantly, suggesting that the best way to play stocks was while sitting on a toilet. "Speculating in a market so obviously overvalued is likely to test even the strongest sphincters," he wrote. "To avoid the embarrassment of involuntary evacuation of the bowl or bladder, it is probably safest to conduct stock market business while one's fundament is seated on a comfortable porcelain throne."

The most obvious sign of Yorkton's success has been the number of competitors trying hard to take away its business. The interlopers don't faze Giustra. "Past fortunes and empires have been built on the back of mining," he says, "and that kind of opportunity exists today. All of a sudden, mining has become like some huge Toys R Us supermarket." Adds Giustra: "There just aren't enough hours in the day to take advantage of all the opportunities."

TELLING FORTUNES

COVER

Over two million Canadians check into JoJo Savard's Psychic Alliance each day



Savard: fame from post-midnight TV pitches

PETER BREGG/MACLEAN'S

BY MARCI McDONALD

The sun was in Leo and the moon was in Cancer as the taxi pulled up outside a prosperous white house nestled below Mount Royal on a leafy Montreal boulevard. The day had been listed as one of the 10 most favorable dates in that month's horoscope, but a visitor could be forgiven for suspecting a planetary mix-up. From the street, the terraced tri-level appeared a model of bourgeois sobriety, betraying no trace of its proprietor's trademark flamboyance. Then, the front door swung open to reveal cascades of blond hair exploding from a black velvet bow. Even from the sidewalk, there was no mistaking the face that has launched millions of phone calls seeking celestial guidance at the rate of $4.99 a minute—that of Jocelyne (JoJo) Savard, who has become the leading Canadian contender in the continent's booming psychic phone-line business.

Ever since she burst onto the late, late-night airwaves in May, 1994, a startling apparition in a flurry of blond ponytails and purple ruffles, the Quebec astrologer has become a celebrity of a distinctly 1990s variety. Her fame has sprung almost exclusively from her post-midnight televised pitches for a 1-900 network of telephonic fortune tellers called JoJo's Psychic Alliance. More than two million Canadians a day have tuned into those after-hours infomercials—30-minute ads masquerading as TV talk shows, complete with game show host Geoff Edwards, guest appearances by soap opera stars and melodramatic re-enactments of predictions-come-true.

That response has brought a windfall not only to the self-styled "Goddess of the Moon and Queen of the Stars," but also to the country's telephone and broadcast companies (page 44). And, although previous American psychic lines have used such personalities as pop crooner Dionne Warwick to plug their wares, it has launched Savard as the chief Canadian example of a new show business species—the infomercial star. Already a fixture in Quebec tabloids like *Allo Police*, she has no qualms about her newfound fame. "It's nice, after all the years of struggle," she says, "to have a little applause."

First aired on 19 private TV stations across the continent—and featuring a controversial testimonial letter from the Prime Minister's wife, Aline Chrétien—Savard's initial infomercial quickly accomplished its aim, to stop late-night channel surfers in their tracks with her outlandish image. As she notes, "People see me and they don't seem to forget!" Currently, a second edition, which she refers to as her new show and has named *The Power of Love*, is running in Boston, Chicago, upper New York state and Florida. Over the past 16 months, both have generated thousands of calls a day—not to mention huge profits for Ormazd Inc., the Miami telemarketing firm that contracted her to front one of its three psychic phone services for a six-figure fee and a small royalty on each call.

Although Savard's line remains a modest player in a field notorious for its secrecy, it ranks as the top-grossing entrant in the Canadian sector of the new dial-a-destiny industry. According to experts, that industry racked up an estimated $100 million in telephone sales last year. As Savard observes with her customary fractured exuberance, "It's mind-smashing to see people are so much in need of a human connection."

But that need lies at the heart of the contentious question that hovers over the psychic phone trade: is it merely a harmless high-tech update on old-fashioned fortune-telling fun—or, as Savard's critics charge, costly hucksterism designed to cash in on the era's rampant loneliness and alienation? She herself characterizes her service as "light therapy—it's almost replacing a certain disappointment about religion and psychiatry. People are searching for something more." Agrees Jacqueline Stallone, the mother of macho movie star Sylvester, who has just filmed her own psychic infomercial for Savard's producers. "Basically, it's a quick fix. At 2 a.m., when you're having troubles with your lover, this is the time you want instant relief. Who else are you going to call—your psychiatrist?"

Some psychiatrists have argued that those who are depressed would be better off doing just that. Los Angeles psychiatrist Daniel Borenstein worries that, by turning to a psychic hotline, truly disturbed patients may put off needed professional help. But Zindel Segal, a psychologist who heads the cognitive-behavior therapy unit at Toronto's Clarke Institute of Psychiatry, hesitates to damn those who are telemarketing reassurance at 3 a.m., the proverbial dark night of the soul. "We have to recognize there are a lot of people who don't come into contact with the mental health system," he says, "or who have lost faith in it."



With Montreal Mayor Pierre Bourque: 'nice to have applause'

Ironically, the most scathing denunciations of phone psychics have come from Bob Garfield, the Washington columnist for *Advertising Age*. Despite the fact that their increasingly slick infomercials have proved a boon to the ad world, he rails at them as "sleazy. The ultimate product they're selling is company—to have someone to talk to at $5 a minute." Acknowledges Nikka Pezaro, a Toronto actress-psychic who works the 4 a.m. shift on one of Savard's rival's lines: "There are a lot of desperate people out there."

One would appear to be Jonita Anderson, the 23-year-old wife of a U.S. navy officer, who pleaded guilty last March to running up $45,000 in unpaid phone bills to psychic lines while her husband was away at sea. Said Baltimore circuit court Judge Thomas Bollinger, who gave her a three-year suspended sentence: "We are talking about a sickness here."

Garfield compares telephone soothsayers with the purveyors of phone sex, who employ the same technology. "As tawdry as the sex lines are," he says, "at least you're getting what you paid for—a fantasy." But that may in fact, be what Savard and her fellow phone seers are also providing: the illusion of certainty in an uncertain, angst-ridden age and the promise of a brighter tomorrow. "Our service is pushing an uplifting, positive approach," Savard says. "I tell my psychics that I don't care how bad it is, you say: 'Things may be difficult now, but it's a transit. It won't last forever.' "

Turning to the otherworldly for counsel is hardly new. From Oedipus' tragic misreading of the Delphic oracle's cryptic pronouncements in ancient Greece to former prime minister William Lyon Mackenzie King's regular séances with his dead mother, both the powerful and powerless have sought answers from the realm of the paranormal. But computerized telephone technology has brought a revolutionary twist to the prophecy business. "Before, you had to go down to your corner psychic," says Barry Beyerstein, a psychology professor at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby,

Telephonic seers offer the illusion of ceainty in an uncertain, angst-ridden age

COVER

B.C. "Now, in the age of the information highway, it's as close as your telephone."

A member of the Committee for Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal, Beyerstein is a militant nonbeliever. But even those like Toronto author Sylvia Fraser, who gives credit to some elements of the supernatural, are skeptical of divination on demand—above all when the $50 billing cap imposed by Canadian phone companies effectively limits calls to 10 minutes. Says Fraser: "Any kind of psychic nurturing takes concentration and focus."

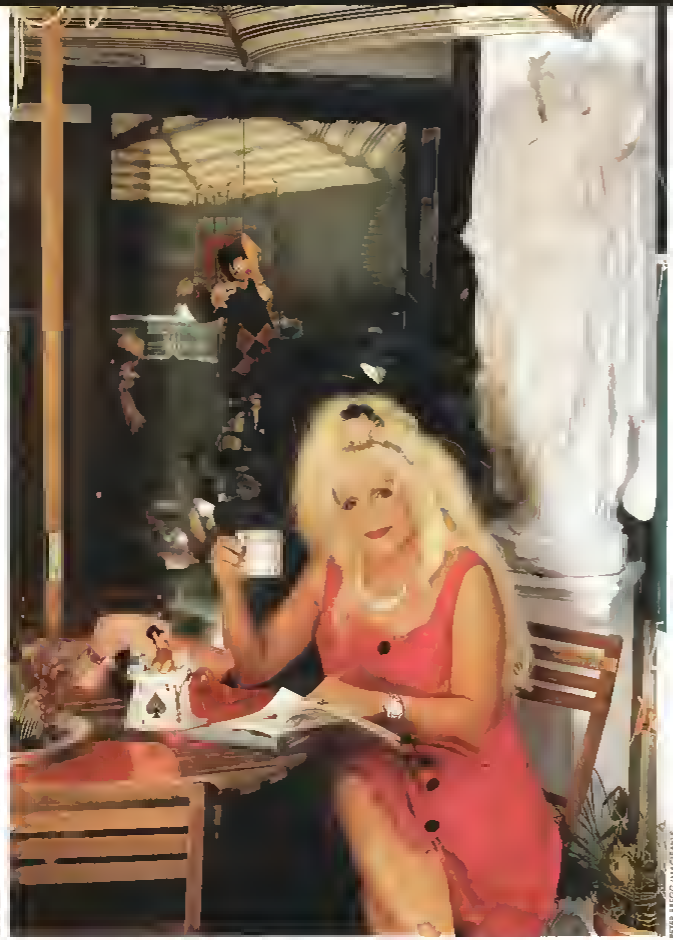
Savard counters that the telephone heightens telepathy. "You meet somebody and you check out the clothes, the makeup," she says. "When there's nobody there to look at, it's much more powerful." Most of her 1,500 psychics work on contract out of their homes. But some low-budget services such as the British Columbia-based Evanly-Rays Psychic Answers run boiler room-style operations: their card readers ply their skills from a noisy office on the outskirts of Kelowna.

Still to the shock of many of her infomercial fans, Savard doesn't do psychic phone duty herself. In fact, as she alights in her cozy Outremont living-room, where crystal balls stud the rose-colored decor, she ignores her own private line ringing incessantly beside her. At five feet, nine inches, with a gold ankle bracelet and an earthy laugh punctuating her energetic monologues, she seems even larger in life than on her infomercials. But she admits even she failed to foresee the scope of her success. So staggering was the initial response to her ad last year that she faced an unforeseen crisis. "We were out of psychics," she says.

On a recruiting blitz, she and her backers papered New Age outlets with flyers announcing, "Psychics and Astrologers! Money-making Opportunity!" She insists supervisors test and screen each clairvoyant. But otherwise Savard leaves the details to aides—among them, Tom Slupski, her husband of one year. A boyishly handsome Polish immigrant, his business card features a picture of her in a low-cut scarlet gown on one side and, on the other, his title: impresario.

Slupski fields the offers that have poured in: endorsements for JoJo dolls, tarot decks and even her own makeup line. With her *JoJo's Love Horoscope* and astral calendar sold out, she will launch a new national horoscope column later this month. And she is booked up this fall as an after-dinner performer on the province's banquet circuit, where she is currently predicting grim times ahead for Premier Jacques Parizeau and a united Canada in 1996. As for her own future, she says that Ormazd may export her bilingual psychic line to Paris. "This is so huge—it's an empire," she exults.

She credits Slupski with her good fortune. But, as he notes, "it wasn't hard to sell JoJo." In a series of star-crossed coincidences that would warm the heart of any network caller—75 per cent of whom are women—they met six years ago in a Montreal hotel lobby. But she says she had already seen him in her chart. At the time, Slupski was running his own Winnipeg delicatessen and seemed an improbable soul mate for a gadabout who loved the Montreal club scene and never bothered to keep groceries in her apartment. But he sent her roses, poems and even takeout pizzas. And five years ago, they moved in together, along with his five-year-old son, whom she helps raise. "You know what I've discovered?" she marvels. "I'm the most unbelievable housewifely person in the world!"



PETER REGGI/MACLEAN'S

Savard at home: even she failed to foresee the scope of her own success

Last year, they decided to get married. The ceremony, she claims, took place atop the Mayan pyramid at Chichén Itza on Mexico's Yucatan peninsula—a mind-boggling notion considering that each of its 91 steps is thigh-high. Savard says she climbed to the summit before donning her hastily devised bridal costume—a strapless white bra and crinoline she had strewn with silk flowers. Now Slupski shies from the limelight. "He loves me shining," she says, "but he wants to be in the dark."

Both also avoid discussing money—either the fees Ormazd pays its psychics or her. They argue that the rough-and-tumble world of psychic telemarketing is too competitive to offer rivals that insight. But Savard is also wary since she discovered the flip side of celebrity. In June, she suddenly found herself on the front page of *La Presse*, where Didier Vrac, a Swiss publisher, accused her of plagiarizing U.S. creative-visualization guru Shakti Gawain. Her longtime Quebec publisher, Pierre Nadeau, quickly issued a news release blaming a ghostwriter he had hired to flesh out her text. And Vrac has since dropped his threat to sue. But Savard was so shaken by the allegations that she landed in hospital. For, as she notes, "we all wear masks." And she is both shrewder and more sensitive than her outrageous public persona betrays. "She really reacted physically to the whole thing," says her sister Johanne, a Montreal labor lawyer. "Her whole credibility was at stake."

In fact, some commentators seized on the occasion to make snide jokes about Savard's psychic gifts. Demanded the Montreal *Gazette*'s Peggy Curran: "Why couldn't JoJo see it coming? Hadn't she read her horoscope?"

On a recent steamy summer morning, JoJo Savard was preparing for a photo session. Ensconced on her backyard patio beneath a huge statue of an angel holding aloft a red light—a souvenir from a spiritualist fair—her longtime makeup artist, Eliane Rozga, was minister ing over her with a powder puff. A staunch believer in her friend's supernatural talents, Rozga is also a regular caller to her psychic phone line. Two nights earlier, when she couldn't reach Savard, she called her 900 number instead—three times. "The next morning," Rozga laughs, "I said to her, 'JoJo, last night was an expensive night!'"

Rozga knows what few fans suspect: behind Savard's artful mask of makeup and blond bangs lie the ugly scars from a disfiguring car accident that she suffered on the French Riviera in 1977. She awoke from a coma, she says, looking like "a monster." Months of plastic surgery reconstructed her face, but she is still missing part of one eyebrow and retains no feeling in her chin. "I drink coffee and it dribbles down my face," she says. "But who cares? It made me aware of the miracle of the body."

She claims that near-death experience—which she dubs her "resurrection experience"—merely heightened her spiritual sixth sense. And her upbeat take on the ordeal is only one example of her knack for putting a determinedly happy face on a life that has not always been easy—even if she seems a little hazy on its details. The biography supplied by her publicist reports her birth date—the cornerstone of any astrological chart—as July 11, 1955. A second, which she faxed to *Maclean's*, lists it as July 7—no year. But records suggest that, like many entertainers, Savard may have hedged her future by shaving eight years off her age. "I don't believe in age," she says.

What seems certain is that she was born in Quebec City, the daughter of a merchant marine officer whom she adored and scarcely ever saw. After years of following him from port to port, shunting Savard and her two sisters in and out of convent schools, her mother finally gave up on the marriage. "I remember her crying so often—always alone," Savard says. "That's why it took me so long to get involved." Constantly humming for the family, she spun her own fantasy world, whipping up costumes on her sewing machine and, during one period, wearing only pink. "If they didn't sell something in pink, she dyed it," says her sister Johanne. "Most people think it's a persona she created for TV, but she's always had that style."

Savard enrolled in fine arts at Montreal's Sir George Williams University, now known as Concordia University. Despite her résumé's claims that she graduated in 1976, archives show she attended several years earlier without receiving a degeee. But as the swirling, stylized paintings on her walls attest, she was an accomplished artist—a pastime her family expected her to pursue when she took off for Europe.

By then, she had already displayed another unsettling gift. At 5,

Soothsaying in the suburbs

In a modest subdivision on the outskirts of Montreal, the lights in neighboring bungalows are already going out for the night when Nicole Bouchard's alarm goes off. Hours earlier, she has whipped up dinner for her husband and two daughters, tidied the kitchen and tucked her brood into bed before lying down for a nap herself. But while her family slumbers on, the clock beside her waterbed jolts her awake at 11:30 p.m.—just in time to log on for her shift as one of 1,500 clairvoyants manning the nocturnal phone lines from the comfort of their own homes for JoJo's Psychic Alliance.

A mother of two turns prophet by night

Slipping behind her desk, Bouchard punches in her pass code on the dial pad of the extra telephone line she has had installed in her house. Then, the 38-year-old housewife listens to the recorded message that details the daily TV schedule for JoJo's infomercials. Within minutes after the first ad has hit the airwaves, Bouchard's phone starts to ring. A computerized switching station has already begun transferring calls to her extension. "Hi, I'm Nicole," she breathes into the receiver, briskly shuffling her tarot deck. "Tell me your name and date of birth."

For the next three hours, Bouchard scans her cards and tries to tune in to the vibrations in the voice at the other end of the line, attempting to assuage her callers' post-midnight angst within an allotted 10-minute time limit. "We give hope," Bouchard says. "You want to remain as positive and upbeat as you can, because you want these people to call you back."

Few of Bouchard's neighbors suspect her pastime. And she declines to discuss her precise pay ment rates. But for a reported $10.25 an hour and a fraction of each call's $4.99 a minute fee, she is only too happy to negotiate her way through the emotional heavy weather that can prompt a caller to dial a stranger at 2 a.m. A good week will net her $600, juggling her oracular duties around her daughters' schedules. "It's the perfect job," she says. "I prayed so hard for it."

Ever since she was a child, Bouchard claims she has had visions. But during a card-reading game at 14, she saw her grandmother's death two weeks before the woman was rushed to the hospital with terminal cancer. That experience so unnerved her that she avoided dabbling in the occult until she ventured into a New Age bookstore 12 years later. By then, she had spent years as a telemarketer, peddling everything from lab equipment to cold cuts. She quit to offer psychic readings in her home, but the profits were proving meagre when a friend called to inform her that JoJo Savard, the astrologer she watched every Friday night on TV, was looking for psychics. Bouchard's husband, a jeweller, told her she was crazy to sign up. But two weeks later, he apologized. "Lets just say," she smiles, "that my husband is happy going to the bank."

Not that Bouchard pretends her job is easy. When a caller's despair remains impervious to her optimistic augury, she turns to her instruction manual and reads off a prepared spiel advising a hasty trip to a doctor or social worker—or even dialling 911. "Some people don't want a reading," she says. "They want help."

M. M.



Friends Network, the original psychic infomercial that debuted in 1991. Slupski promptly patched together a video sampling of her TV guest spots and took it to David Greenberg, the president of Ormazd's parent, Integrated Communication Network Inc. in Miami. A telemarketer, Greenberg already had a psychic phone line—in Spanish. In fact, that infomercial, starring a Hispanic astrologer known as Profesora, provided the model for Savard's own second ad, shot at CFCF last spring.

Slupski's approach also came at a propitious time. In April, 1994, a month before Savard's first infomercial aired, the 1-900-number technology vital to psychic phone lines had finally arrived in Canada. In anticipation, she sent out letters soliciting testimonials. Among them was one to 24 Sussex Drive. In 1988 she had dreamed of recently retired Liberal Leader Jean Chrétien astride a radiant white dog. For her, that meant one thing: he would be the next prime minister. That prospect seemed so improbable that Johanne Savard told her not to go public because "she'd look like a fool." But the astrologer tracked Chrétien down to a Montreal hotel. "He said, 'Oh, no, don't wish me that,'" Savard recalls.

But she stayed in touch with him and his wife. Still, she admits that, on March 16, 1994, when she wrote

Savard glimpsed her destiny as she channel-surfed in New York City

COVER

she had begged her mother to hide her two-year-old brother in a closet because the angels were going to take him away in a train. Weeks later, he was killed in a freak railway accident. Over the years, her family began to heed her periodic quirky pronouncements. Says Johanne, a longtime skeptic who is now married to a man named Georges—Canadian Pacific executive Georges Bélanger—as her sister predicted: "After a while you think it can't all be a lucky guess."

In the wake of her accident, Savard's feverish visions increased. And after that mishap, both her path, and her accounts of it, grow picaresque. Along the way, her sister recalls her as "a 'granola'—no makeup, long dresses and flowers in her hair." During that incarnation, she made her way to Bombay to study for what her press biography reports as "an MA in astrology" from the "Swami J. Institute." Her guru, it turns out, has shown a knack for making headlines himself: Shri Chandra Swamiji Maharaj, known as "Swamiji," allegedly helped finance Saudi arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi during the 1986 Iran-contra affair.

Disillusioned, Savard found herself in Vancouver in 1981, where she landed her first short-lived job as a television astrologer. But back in Montreal a year later, she got a call from a producer for CFCF TV, who hired her to read horoscopes on the station's morning show. Thirteen years and countless hosts later, she still does that weekly gig, with stellar ratings. In 1989, CFCF rewarded Savard with her own weekly five-minute show, which now runs between the Friday night late news and *The X-Files*.

But Savard's first foray into the astrological phone business proved ill-fated. In 1992, two young Montreal promoters hired her to pre-record generic horoscopes. She swears she checked out their charts, but two years later they fell out over her fees. In December, she sued them for $49 000 in back royalties and other payments. She waves off protests that she should have foreseen the debacle: "It's like I'm supposed to be God."

Then in the summer of 1993 on a visit to New York City, she glimpsed her destiny watching late-night TV in a friend's apartment, she stumbled on Dionne Warwick playing host for *The Psychic*



Savard with TV host Dini Petty; performing (top); a dream about Chrétien led to a controversial testimonial from Aline

Aline Chrétien requesting some confirmation of the prediction for her infomercial, she regarded it as a long shot. But she had forwarded her plea through André Gourd, then the Quebec Liberal government's representative in Ottawa. And within a month, a courier arrived with a two-paragraph missive. "I hope that your predictions regarding American politics turn out as well as your prediction, many years ago, that my husband would become Prime Minister of Canada in this past election,' wrote Aline Chrétien. Says Savard: "When I got that letter, I thought, Shucks, she's giving me the break of a lifetime!"

Her infomercial had been on the air two months before the Prime Minister's incredulous aides discovered her coup. Fearing a replay of the 1987 uproar over Nancy Reagan's astrological dabblings, they swiftly undertook damage control. Spokesman Patrick Parisot dismissed it as a "standard response" never meant for public consumption. But Savard's detailed request belies that assertion. "Do you think I would have done such a thing without permission?" she says. "You think I want to become an enemy of the government?"

Throughout the controversy, Aline Chrétien herself maintained a sibylline silence. But Gourd received no indication of her displeasure. "The office of the Prime Minister reacts to its own agenda, but I'm not sure it's the agenda of Madame Chrétien," he says. "It just showed she was a very nice person to write back."

Nevertheless, Savard's new infomercial omits the offending letter. And, ever canny at marketing her image, she now presents herself as "a motivator" rather than a prophet. With her usual penchant for looking on the brighter side, she even promises that the current global upheavals—which have produced the very alienation and despair on which her service thrives—are but a passing planetary phase, the last violent shudders before a new spiritual age dawns. After all, as she says, nothing lasts forever—either astral transits or perhaps even the psychic phone-line phenomenon itself. Meanwhile, no matter what time of the day or night, her recorded voice greets troubled callers with the breathy reassurance that "We are here for you always"—or at least as long as they can pay their phone bills. □



THE ARTS AS SEEN BY

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The dawning of the infomercial age

BY MARCI McDONALD

COVER



Carr: the son of a circus high diver, with a knack for publicity stunts

In the cavernous expanse of the Club Trilogy, a disco on Toronto's bleak airport strip, an unlikely cast had gathered for an even unlikelier show business task. Beneath a battery of TV lights and cameras, veteran rock 'n' roller Ronnie Hawkins, fresh from celebrating his 60th birthday at Massey Hall, was prodding his Hawks into the spotlight to film a raucous rendition of their new single, *Days Gone By*. Waiting in the wings for their turn before the cameras were soul singer George St. Kitts, a Hollywood comic named Joey Vance and a micro-miniskirted former Playboy model named Lisa Heughan, who had just made headlines with a provocative claim on New Year's Eve in 1992. Heughan charged that U.S. customs officials, upon learning of her occupation, had harassed her after she refused to strip at their office party.

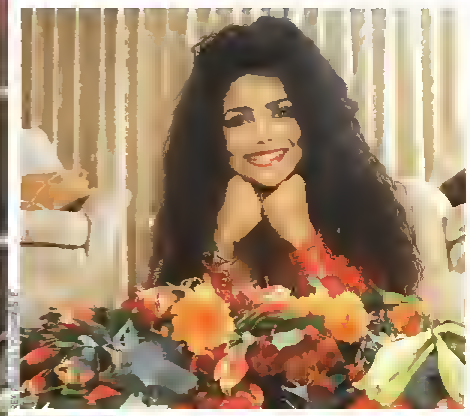
But that attention-getting lineup was on hand merely to promote the real star of the night's show: Heughan's father, Tony Carrino, better known as Anthony Carr, who bills himself as "the world's most documented psychic"—a title owed at least in part to his irrepressible knack for publicity stunts. The son of a circus high diver, Carr learned of his psychic abilities from the gypsy card readers who used to babysit him during his father's carny career. Now, to the strains of a rock band entitled Gravy, Carr was making another bid for celebrity—filming a variety cum-talk show to plug his 10-month-old psychic phone line, the Anthony Carr Psychic and Astrology Group. For, as Carr discovered, no psychic hotline can exist without an infomercial—a paid TV commercial whose chatty entertainment format and celebrity testimonials are designed to whip viewers into such an emotional state that they cannot resist dialling the 1-900 number repeatedly bannered across their screens. Indeed, those increasingly prolific psychic infomercials are changing the dynamics of the advertising and broadcast industries, inspiring a new rush to longer ads with their own plots—and their own stars. "I'm more or less the entertainer," Carr admits, "the front man for the company who gets them to call the line."

Ever since they first appeared on American TV screens in 1991, psychic infomercials have revolutionized an advertising form once dismissed as the murky fiefdom of fly-by-night operators peddling slicer-dicers and spray-on hair. In the process, they have also proved a boon to broadcasters, turning the unprofitable post-midnight hours formerly reserved for reruns into a newfound gold mine. At Hamilton's CHCH TV, which shows a steady overnight diet of infomercials—including Carr's first effort and a new pitch for the top-rated Canadian entry, *JoJo's Psychic Alliance*—they have meant more than $1 million in extra annual revenues. "For years, the rating services told us virtually nobody was watching at that time of night," says Rob Dilworth, the station's director of audience research. "But these guys have proven there are people out there."

Scott McClellan, communications director for the Canadian Direct Marketing Association, agrees. According to McClellan, last year infomercials generated $30 million in Canadian sales—a fraction of the estimated $14-billion North American market. Using that bottom line argument before the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission last fall, he helped persuade the CRTC to let the country's broadcasters run infomercials during the regulated airtime before midnight, as well as weekend mornings, to compete with those already airing on U.S. border stations.



LaToya Jackson: the once comically amateurish productions have been transformed into glossy formats rivalling prime-time programming



Psychic hotlines have turned late-night TV into a gold mine, a bonanza built on uncertainty and doubt



Warwick; Thomas (right): a rash of copycat celebrity psychic phone lines

Still, most Canadian programmers prefer to leave the lengthy commercials in their old time slots, where they have already blurred the increasingly fuzzy line between advertising and entertainment. "One of the arguments we made to the CRTC is that people tune in just to watch infomercials," McClellan says. "It's quite clear that JoJo has her own audience."

In fact, broadcasters and direct marketers alike credit psychic hotlines with revitalizing the infomercial industry. So crucial are the hybrid ads considered to the fortunes of psychic hotlines that some companies supply their telephone seers with broadcast schedules to prepare them for an onslaught of calls. Says Mary Grant, the manager of a numbered company that owns Carr's psychic line: "I can tell you almost to the minute when the calls are going to come, from the time the infomercial starts to a half hour after it ends."

In Canada, unlike the United States, each infomercial must now be cleared by the Telecaster Committee, a 23-year old service set up by the country's private broadcasters to vet TV commercials for possible regulatory transgressions that could cost a station its licence. But in the eight months since the committee began reviewing infomercials for a $10-a-minute fee, it has approved 69 submissions—including 10 for psychic phone lines.

Most are patterned after the granddaddy of the genre, which began on U.S. channels four years ago, touting the wildly successful *Psychic Friends Network*. A 30-minute mock talk show, it stars Grammy Award-winning singer Dionne (*I Say a Little Prayer For You*) Warwick as host and features her 52-year-old personal clairvoyant, Linda Georgian. A former Florida phys ed teacher who still does personal readings from her Fort Lauderdale home, Georgian had worked up her own TV show for a local cable channel when she was approached in 1991 by a Maryland direct-response marketer to front an infomercial for a psychic 1-900 line. Georgian, in turn, tapped her friend Warwick, who was paid a flat fee for her appearance, plus a tiny royalty on each call. Ironically, some analysts see the singer, whose own career was then in the doldrums, as the secret of the ad's appeal. Says Steve Dworman of the Los Angeles-based *Infomercial Marketing Report*: "They had Dionne Warwick and great production values."

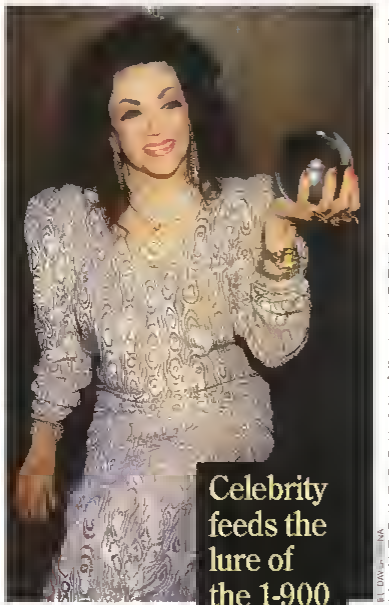
Aired more than 300 times a week on channels across the continent, the lavishly produced half-hour has since prompted more than four million calls to The Psychic Friends Network—an estimated 7,500 to 10,000 a day—each one at the rate of $3.99 (U.S.) a minute or $4.99 in Canada. Last year, that response accounted for at least half of the $100 million in phone sales raked in by the line's operators, Baltimore-based Inphomation Communications Inc. According to Jordan Whitney Inc., publisher of the California-based *Direct Response Television Monitoring Report*, *The Psychic Friends Network* ranked as 1994's top infomercial—outstripping *Buns of Steel*, *Smart Mop* and even Inphomation's telegenic psychologist Barbara De Angelis, who pitches a video-cassette series called *Making Love Work*. To Dworman, the fact that fortune-tellers are outdrawing relationship gurus is merely a sign that some marketers have cannily read the troubled times. "I think it says more about our society than about a consumer trend," he observes.

The man credited with launching the psychic infomercial phenomenon is Michael Warren Lasky,

the president of Inphomation, a former professional sports handicapper. Last June, Baltimore's *Sun* reported that in 1986 the Maryland attorney general's office had sued Lasky for failing to turn over the membership rolls of a fitness franchise, the Pikesville Nautilus Club, which had gone out of business the previous year. Although the court ruled that Lasky was not legally obliged to reimburse disgruntled former members, he ultimately did so.

Now, his Inphomation reports $150 million in annual phone sales, inspiring other entrepreneurial spirits to follow the lead of his hit infomercial. Among that cast is the main backer behind Anthony Carr's psychic phone line, a former Carleton University economist named Peter Appleton, who was once the president of the now-defunct Alliance for a Drug-Free Canada, a corporate-sponsored lobby group. In 1990, he co-authored a book on the narcotics trade called *Billion $$$ High*.

Despite the success of Lasky's foray into electronic marketing, he declined to be interviewed by *Maclean's*, as did Warwick, who now works out of Brazil. And Inphomation's California public relations agency reports that the usually talkative Georgian has shut herself away in Fort Lauderdale, suffering from cluster migraines. Still, their *Psychic Friends Network* plays on. Now in its ninth edition, the infomercial has come to resemble a prime-time TV series, like characters in an ongoing sitcom plot, audience members reappear to report how previous predictions have materialized in the form of new boyfriends or calamities averted. Warwick's newly resuscitated celebrity has also prompted dozens of other fading showbiz and sports stars to leap into the infomercial spotlight.



Stallone: a success that proves ominously that 'the world is in pain'

Celebrity feeds the lure of the 1-900 number

Still, if imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, the clearest gauge of Warwick's impact is the rush of other personalities to host their own infomercials for copycat psychic lines. Among them are Michael Jackson's look-alike sister, LaToya, and Philip Michael Thomas, an actor last seen as Don Johnson's co-star on the hit series *Miami Vice*. Now as emcee of the *Philip Michael Thomas Psychic Connection*, he sings and plays the piano with his daughter Sasha while urging viewers to "turn things around in your life" by calling for a free three-minute sample reading.

But the only celebrity who has made a dent in Inphomation's market is Kenny Kingston, a veteran Hollywood medium who bills himself as "Psychic to the Stars." Greeting viewers with his signature salutation, "Hello, sweet spirit," Kingston has periodically turned up on TV talk shows to recount his conversations with the ghosts of Marilyn Monroe and Lucille Ball. He claims both have conveniently supplied him with predictions for the annual Oscar race, although not always with otherworldly accuracy. This spring, he appeared to be cashing in on the current rage for helpful hints from the far side: his infomercial, entitled *Your Psychic Experience*, wafted to the 14th spot on the National Cable Rankings.

Meanwhile, the latest arrival on the TV psychic bandwagon is Sylvester Stallone's mother, Jacqueline, who filmed her own infomercial last month in California for the same Miami telemarketers who run JoJo's Psychic Alliance. Stallone, who claims to have once supplied astrological advice to Dionne Warwick, says she put her son through school by plotting astral charts at her kitchen table in Philadelphia. "He was raised on it," she says. "Even his teachers would call for their horoscopes. They didn't care whether Sylvester showed up at school or not." Stallone admits she failed to foresee her own entry into the psychic infomercial bazaar, whose thriving fortune she sees as an ominous sign. "Basically," she says, "it shows the world is in pain."

In fact, at the very moment the infomercial industry is on the verge of mainstream respectability—with leading ad agencies creating special divisions to handle the new form—its pioneers are also anguishing over its future. Inspired by the psychic infomercial phenomenon, some Fortune 500 corporations like Ford Motor Co. and Procter & Gamble Inc. have suddenly invaded the field over the past year, throwing it into upheaval. "Now, the big guys are doing infomercials," says Jordan Whitney's John Kogler. "It's an excellent way to educate consumers about a product, which you can't do in a 30-second spot."

Last year, in the most striking example, Apple Computer Inc. launched a half-hour TV ad patterned on a situation comedy script. Entitled *The Martinettis Bring Home a Computer*, the story line followed the members of an apparently typical American family—played by actors—as they discovered the joys of the company's Macintosh Performa model. So heartwarming did the domestic drama prove that response was three to four times higher than Apple's projections—and inspired a new term in infomercial jargon, the "storymercial."

Now, pharmaceutical firms have followed suit after the makers of one sleeping pill realized that a late-night TV spot provided a forum tailor-made for their insomniac market. In the wake of Ross Perot's prime-time infomercials in the 1992 presidential elections, politicians too have begun to explore their campaign and fund-raising possibilities. And a lyrical ad commissioned by Prince Edward Island's department of tourism prompted one industry expert to predict that infomercials could replace travelogues.

But the entry of such wealthy players has increased the cost of even post-midnight airtime on both sides of the border. "It's a seller's market from the stations' point of view," confirms David Savage, vice-president of the Washington-based National Infomercial Marketing Association. "Their rates are going up, so it's becoming harder for marketers to make a profit." That worry is on the agenda of NIMA's annual convention next month in Las Vegas, where the industry stages its version of the Academy Awards. Last year, those festivities were buoyant, studded by stars, including *Wheel of Fortune*'s Vanna White, who is better known among the infomercial crowd for promoting a tooth whitener called Perfect Smile. But this year the convention will open with a gloomy question: "Media Costs: Are They Really Out of Control?"

The spiralling rates are pushing marginal infomercials like Anthony Carr's psychic variety show right off the airwaves. Already, he complains that the company that hired him can only afford 4 a.m. spots on a half-dozen stations. But Carr's pal Ronnie Hawkins—taking time out from a cross-Canada tour—can attest to an audience for even those obscure slots. "Everywhere I went," he marvels, "two or three people said to me, 'I saw you on that crazy psychic show.'" Not that Hawkins is a believer in the phone divination he is purportedly plugging. "I always call it good guessing," he says. "I told Anthony, 'Give me three winning lottery numbers in a row and I'll say, 'Kid, you've got something going'." □

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Walking all the way to the cellar

BY TRENT FRAYNE

Q: How come the Toronto Blue Jays, World Series champions in 1992 and 1993, crash-landed next door to the cellar in 1994 and 1995? Why so far so fast?
A: Consider the following:
"The walks'll kill yuh"—Del Bissonette, 1949
"I threw strikes"—Fergie Jenkins, 1976
"Too many teams, not enough arms"
—Tony Kubek, 1995

The old New York Yankees never got tired of winning the pennant, whereas the Blue Jays are a grisly sight after a mere two seasons

Adelphia Louis Bissonette came down from five years as the first baseman for the Brooklyn Dodgers to manage the minor league Toronto Maple Leafs in 1949. He had a long, sad face, big front teeth and dark circles shadowing both eyes, prompting the ballplayers to call him "Rack" behind his back, short for raccoon.

The ball club wasn't much, an assortment of aging guys on their way from the majors to oblivion and kids hoping to get up there some day soon. They travelled by train, enabling two of us scribes—Gord Walker for the *Toronto Star* and me for the old *Toronto Telegram*—to sit in Bissonette's compartment and listen to him talk baseball as we rolled through the night from town to town—Newark, Syracuse, Baltimore, Montreal and the rest. About pitching, Del had this one ongoing philosophy: "The walks'll kill yuh."

The reason the walks'll kill yuh was not just that they gave batters a free ride to first, but also that the players in the field gradually lost concentration, began to relax and soon were missing balls they should have caught.

Ferguson Arthur Jenkins is a solidly constructed 6-foot-5, a solemn-faced Canadian from Chatham, Ont., a baseball Hall of Famer who pitched for two seasons for the Boston Red Sox following seven for the Chicago Cubs and two for the Texas Rangers. In six of those years with the Cubs he won 20 games or more, a remarkable feat for a guy compelled to work his home games in windy little Wrigley Field, one of the coolest parks anywhere, a vine-adorned anachronism that even today basks in unmerited encomiums from baseball sentimentalists.

In the spring of 1976 at Winter Haven, Fla., I asked Jenkins in the Red Sox clubhouse what the secret was in hanging up that remarkable record in Chicago. He frowned in thought, as though it were a new question, then said, "I threw strikes."

That slowed me. "If the ball's over the plate," I muttered, "don't guys whack it?"

He was patient. "You have to have something *on* the ball," he said. "But if you throw strikes nobody gets a free ride and your own guys stay sharp behind you."

Anthony Christopher Kubek is voluble and warmhearted, a rangy guy who played shortstop and the outfield for the Yankees for nine seasons beginning in 1957 and who performed in six World Series. After that, he was a Blue Jays television broadcaster for 13 seasons, ending in 1989. In all those years, Tony never seemed to tire of supplying Toronto scribes with time- anecdotes and inside glimpses of the game. These days he lives in Appleton, Wis., where I phoned him just the other day. I said that the Yankees never wearied of winning the pennant when he was there, whereas the Blue Jays are a grisly sight after a mere two seasons. How come?

"Pitching," he said. "Pitching and expansion. When I played there were eight teams in each league. Now there are 14 in each. That adds up to 12 more teams, which means 120 more pitchers. Too many teams, not enough arms. Look up the bases on balls."

Such a revelation. Blue Jays pitchers through Aug. 20 had walked more batters than any team in either major league, the 28th worst staff. A race for the pennant? No. A race for the playoffs? No. But here lurks a dogfight with the Chicago White Sox for the lead in bases on balls—481 to 476.

By contrast, only two teams in the entire National League had reached even 400—the Florida Marlins at 401 and Philadelphia at 400. Of course, these days, in having attained rock bottom, the Blue Jays have assembled a staff unrecognizable from the one that razed Atlanta in the '92 World Series. Strong arms have gone elsewhere (David Cone, Jimmy Key, Tom Henke, Todd Stottlemyre, David Wells) or have been encased in mothballs (Jack Morris and Duane Ward). Now the Blue Jays totter along with a roster of strangers—Crabtree, Carrara, Cornett, Rogers, Hurtado, among a cast of thousands.

By no coincidence, runaway division leaders have pitchers who get the ball over the plate. The Cleveland Indians, once the American League's laugh leader, now own the best won-lost record in the AL and show the fewest walks, at 327. The Red Sox, well in front in the AL East, are third in fewest walks. In the other league, Cincinnati and Atlanta, miles ahead in their divisions, are among the most frugal of walks-givers—third and fourth overall, at 308 and 314.

Unlike the Blue Jays, Atlanta has kept its World Series staff virtually intact—indeed, the Braves even improved it by luring baseball's top pitcher, Greg Maddux, to Georgia. In the '92 World Series, Steve Avery, Tom Glavine and John Smoltz were the starters, and they're still taking their regular turns.

Still, it is worth noting that whereas the Blue Jays fell to pieces between 1993 and 1994, the Yankees of the Kubek era rolled along to 10 pennants in 12 years under Casey Stengel. What accounted for such grand consistency? Part of it was the fact that it occurred before free agency, when the option clause in contracts gave owners a lifetime lease on a player's services.

"And part of it was the vastness of the Yankee Stadium outfield before the park was renovated 20 years ago," Kubek says, rattling off the former dimensions—"461 feet in centre-field, 457 in left, 367 and more to right-centre. What a pitcher's paradise the old stadium was for guys like Ralph Terry, Jim Bouton, Al Downing and Whitey Ford. They could throw strikes and, if somebody happened to cork one, Mickey Mantle would go and get it."

Whereupon there was a long silence at the other end of the line. Was Ma Bell sleeping? No, Tony Kubek was ruminating. "It's like they say," his voice broke the spell. "If you ain't got pitchin', you ain't got nuthin'."

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Sample

HONORS FOR AN ARTIST

Wolfville, N.S., and Acadia University joined forces last week to help celebrate the 75th birthday of favorite son Alex Colville, one of Canada's best-known living painters. A banner across Main Street expressed birthday greetings and nearly 700 well-wishers from throughout the Maritimes gathered at the university's art gallery. The backdrop was Colville: Serigraphs, an exhibition of silk-screen prints that opened in June. Earlier, Colville had signed 200 posters of his most recent painting, *Coyote and Alders*, which sold for $50. Unsigned copies went for $25, with all proceeds going to establish a Friends of the Gallery fund. Lancelot Press of Hantsport, N.S., also launched *Ordinary Magic—a Biographical Sketch of Alex Colville* by James Perkin, who was president of Acadia when Colville was chancellor in the 1980s. The Toronto-born Colville, who has lived in Wolfville, the home town of his wife, Rhoda, since 1973, says he was surprised by the celebrations. "I've known for more than a year they were going to launch the book at a 75th birthday party," he told *Maclean's*, "but I hadn't realized the extent of what they had planned." Colville has plenty of his own plans. He recently completed a silk screen and has started another painting. Even though he is a septuagenarian, he adds: "I'm still working at my normal tempo."



Colville: surprised by a big birthday bash

DAN DALE

BACK TO THE FUTURE



Wallin: splashy return

PETER IRSEGG/MACLEAN'S

Neatly five months after she was uncer emoniously yanked from the co-anchor's chair on CBC's *Prime Time News*, journalist **Pamela Wallin** is preparing to make a splashy return to television. On Sept. 11, the CBC will premiere *Pamela Wallin Live*, a one-hour interview and call-in program to be broadcast Monday to Friday at 9 p.m. EST. Last week, as she was busy moving her new production company, Current Affairs Group Ltd., into an elegant midtown Toronto office, Wallin was looking forward to the challenge. The show, she says, will feature everyone from senior politicians to entertainers in "intimate conversations." While the show may appear to be just "talking heads," the 42-year-old native of Wadena, Sask., says she is glad to be getting back to basics. "A lot of technological wizardry doesn't mean much to the viewer," she insists. And although Wallin has been tight-lipped about events last April, when she ceased being **Peter Mansbridge**'s co-host on the news program, she also insists that she is happy to still be working at the CBC. "I'm working with Newsworld," she explains. "That's a whole different crew."

Edited by **BARBARA WICKENS**

PEOPLE

A STITCH IN TIME

Actors sometimes go to great lengths to learn a new skill, so that they will look credible in a role. But Stratford, Ont.-based **Sheila McCarthy** had to look no further than her next-door neighbor for help with her new role in *Picket Fences*, the Emmy Award-winning CBS TV series about the bizarre happenings in Rome, Wis. McCarthy—who came to public attention in the 1987 movie *I've Heard the Mermaids Singing*—portrays Sue, the new girlfriend of coroner Cartet Pike (**Kelly Connell**). The couple become quilting partners after Pike attempts suicide. "I didn't have a clue about quilting," says McCarthy. "But thank goodness I have a wonderful neighbor to help make me look good." McCarthy, 39, who is married to actor **Peter Donaldson** also has 16 feature films to her credit, including *House Arrest*, which she has just finished filming in Los Angeles with **Jamie Lee Curtis**. "I've been really lucky," says McCarthy. "I get to live in Canada, and still get some nice, juicy roles on both sides of the border." The best of both worlds.



McCarthy: new skill

PETER IRSEGG/MACLEAN'S



Bachman (left), Starr: 'Look at who I get to go on stage with every night'

JEFF VINNICK/CP

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

Going on the road with ex-Beatle **Ringo Starr** is a pretty cool gig as far as guitarist **Randy Bachman** is concerned. "Look at who I get to go on stage with every night," says the Vancouver-based Bachman. He and the rest of the All-Starr Band, including The Who's **John Entwistle** and **Billy Preston**, kicked off their current tour in June in Japan before heading to North America. Says Bachman of his fellow musicians: "They're legends." Bachman is no stranger to fame himself. In the 1970s, he and partner **Burton Cummings** were the driving force behind The Guess Who, the Winnipeg band whose hits—such as *American Woman* and *These Eyes*—helped draw world attention to the Canadian rock scene. Later, Bachman formed another successful band, Bachman-Turner Overdrive, best known for its international hit *Takin' Care of Business*. These days, each member of the All-Starr Band plays a few songs from his past. Still, Bachman, who had not toured since 1993, says that he is surprised by how many people remember him. And it apparently surprised Ringo as well. "Ringo walked up to me and said, 'You're a really big deal in Canada, aren't you?'" says Bachman. "I just smiled at him." And kept on rockin'.

Preventing and treating osteoporosis

Facts Did You Know?

Osteoporosis is a major public health problem.

One in four women, and one in eight men over the age of 50 are affected.

The disease makes your bones porous and brittle and results in fractures, deformity, disability and a significant decrease in quality of life.

Women are affected more than men partly because of the estrogen loss that occurs after menopause.

There is a safe test for osteoporosis called bone densitometry.

Ask your doctor about the test if you have four or more risk factors.

PREVENTION is the most effective way of halting the disease—a well-balanced diet that includes a good supply of calcium, regular exercise and therapies which can help prevent further bone loss such as hormone therapy, where appropriate.

The Osteoporosis Society of Canada is here to help! Call or write for more information.

UPDATE

Treatment of Osteoporosis

In addition to hormone therapy, Canadian scientists are studying treatment for osteoporosis. Some ongoing research include:

- bisphosphonates *(family of non-hormonal drugs)*
- calcitonin *(used to slow bone loss)*
- sodium fluoride *(used to increase bone mass)*
- progesterone *(female hormone usually taken in combination with estrogen)*
- testosterone (male hormone)/ anabolic steroid
- Vitamin D compounds
- anti-estrogen, and estrogen-like compounds
- parathyroid hormone

Consult your doctor about the latest treatment options.

The risk test

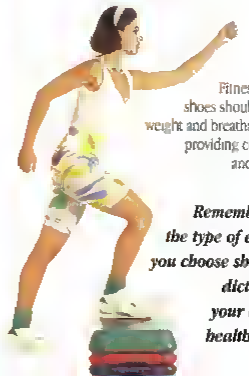
"Yes" answers indicate increased risk of osteoporosis.

- Female?
- Caucasian or Asian?
- Slender, with small bones?
- Low-calcium diet?
- Lower estrogen levels because of menopause?
- Physically inactive?
- A cigarette smoker?
- Family history of osteoporosis?
- Too much caffeine or alcohol?

Fit Program for Healthy Bones

Exercise is a key to maintaining our health, especially our bones. Get on a "fit program" today—active living is the key.

Purpose:	Maintain Bone Health
Frequency:	2 - 3 times per week
Intensity:	Moderate
Time:	20 - 30 minutes
Type:	Weight bearing exercise (against gravity, increased resistance)
Examples:	Walking, rowing, stair climbing, racquet sports, step aerobics



Fitness walking shoes should be light weight and breathable while providing cushioning and support.

Remember that the type of exercise you choose should be dictated by your current health status.

"Bone up" your favorite recipes

Add milk instead of water to canned soup.
Add 30 mL of powdered milk to muffin, cake and cookie mixes.
Add seasonings to yogurt and serve on baked potatoes as veg etable dip or salad dressing.
Add seasoned yogurt with tuna for tuna sandwiches.

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Factors that can reduce calcium absorption are oxalic acids found in foods like rhubarb, spinach or strawberries, unleavened whole grains and foods high in dietary fibre*. Drinking more than two cups of a caffeinated drink, increases the amount of calcium secreted in the urine, more than two drinks of alcohol per day lowers the body's retention of calcium.

*This is not to say these are "bad" foods, but they can reduce calcium availability.

If you are eating a large amount of foods that hamper calcium absorption, it's even more crucial that you consume foods rich in absorbable calcium – foods like:

- salmon and sardines with bones
- milk and milk products
- bok choy and kale

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Osteoporosis Society of Canada

The brotherhood

The McMullens grapple with commitment

It has been a dreary summer for Hollywood movies. Liam Neeson skinned his knees in *Rob Roy*. Mel Gibson joined the kilt brigade as a medieval Mad McMax in *Braveheart*. Sean Connery looked bored on the throne of a theme-park Camelot in *First Knight*. Keanu Reeves crashed in *Johnny Mnemonic*. Clint Eastwood cried in *Bridges of Madison County*. *Batman Forever* swooped down like a thief in the night, leaving a trail of plastic merchandise. *Waterworld* was waterlogged. And now a summer that began with a trio of broadsword epics ends in cyberspace with *Virtuosity*, *The Net* and *Mortal Kombat* recycling the old action clichés with knights in shining software.

Just what is a moviegoer to do? Of all the blockbusters, *Apollo 13* was the only one that really delivered. Meanwhile, many of the summer's best movies are small, independent releases that have somehow survived amid the Hollywood onslaught. They include *Smoke*, a gem of story-telling starring Harvey Keitel as a cigar-store owner in Brooklyn, N.Y., *Il Postino* (The Postman), the exquisite tale of an Italian peasant who befriends exiled Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, *Kids*, a disturbing street-level excursion through teenage sexuality, and *Safe*, a chilling story of a California woman who becomes allergic to her environment.

Now Edward Burns, a 27-year-old novice director from Long Island, N.Y., has finessed Hollywood in true David-and-Goliath fashion. After winning the top prize at the Sundance Film Festival early this year, his low-budget feature debut, *The Brothers McMullen*, has bumped *Waterworld* off movie screens in a number of U.S. cities. And it cost just $1 million, 1/200th of *Waterworld*'s budget.

The Brothers McMullen is not a brilliant movie. But it fills a vacuum. It is a romantic comedy on a human scale, rich in dialogue and free of gimmickry—a well-acted film that revels in the nitty-gritty of relationships the way Woody Allen movies used to do. And, in the Allen tradition, Burns writes, directs *and* co-stars with his girlfriend.

The Brothers McMullen tells a straightforward story of three Irish Catholic brothers on Long Island who end up sharing their childhood home after their father's death. Each is struggling with the issue of committing to one woman for the rest of his life. Jack (Jack Mulcahy) is tempted to have an affair after five years of marriage to an ideal wife named Molly (Connie Britton). Patrick (Mike McGlone) is feeling pressure to settle down with his Jewish fiancee, Susan (Shari Albert). And Barry (Burns) is a cynic who makes a policy of rejecting women at the first sign of attachment. Urging Patrick not to accept a life sentence with Susan, Barry warns him, "She'll be the last woman that you'll get to see completely naked and be able to touch."



Bahns (left), Burns: the nitty-gritty of relationships

Burns ended up casting himself as Barry by default. "I didn't want to ask another actor to work for deferred wages," he explained in an interview last week. "It was one less mouth to feed, and I knew I'd show up every day." In the role of Audrey, the attractive woman who tests Barry's fear of commitment, Burns cast his girlfriend of five years, Maxine Bahns, although she had no acting experience. "She took a bit of prodding," he says, but she has since abandoned postgraduate studies in Latin and Greek to pursue acting full time.

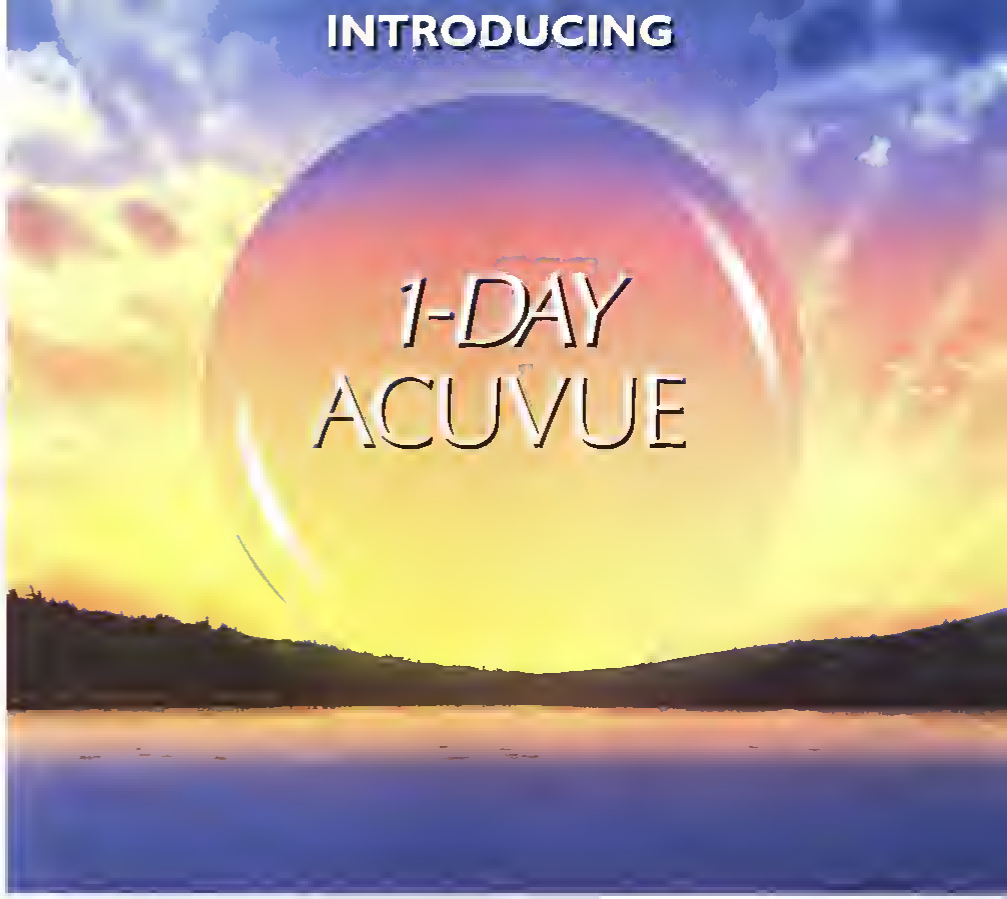
Making an economical marriage between life and art, Burns used his parents' Long Island house as the family home in the movie. His father, Edward J. Burns, a retired police sergeant who now teaches communications at New York University, helped raise money for *McMullen* in his role as executive-producer. The director's mother, Molly, catered the crew's meals. And the film was cheaply shot on 16-mm stock. Blown up to 35 mm for the big screen, it looks a little grainy, but that happens to suit the movie's style of no-frills realism.

The director, who had a day job as a production assistant for NBC-TV's *Entertainment Tonight*, filmed *McMullen* on weekends over an eight-month period. Rushing to finish it for the Sundance Festival, he edited at all hours of the night. After one marathon session in the cutting room, he had an early morning ET assignment to help prepare a hotel-room interview with Jodi Foster, who was promoting *Nell*. "We got everything set up," he recalls. "Then I lay down on Jodi Foster's bed, and the next thing I know, I've got some publicist waking me up saying they've got my snoring on the microphone."

After winning the Sundance prize, however, Burns found himself on the other side of the camera. Interviewed by his ET colleagues, he announced that he was leaving the show to make films full time. This fall, he starts shooting his second feature, a comedy about a retired New York City fireman and his two sons. "I thought I would do a trilogy of low budget films about families or brothers or something," says the director, whose new film has a budget of $4 million. "By my standards, it's enormous, but by Hollywood standards, it's lunch money."

The director points out that his mother fed him a steady diet of Woody Allen movies when he was growing up, and the influence has clearly rubbed off. But Burns does not mind watching the odd blockbuster. And everyone is asking him what he thinks of *Waterworld*. Well? "Oh, I don't know," he shrugs. "It wasn't so bad." But he expresses no interest in making big action movies. "I love working with actors, and I like dialogue," says Burns, "so why should I waste my time with special effects?"

BRIAN D. JOHNSON



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A writer's anguish

George Eliot turned her pain into literary gold

GEORGE ELIOT, VOICE OF A CENTURY
By Frederick R Karl
(Penguin, 708 pages, $37 50)

George Eliot's reputation has waxed and waned like the fortunes of one of her own fictional heroines At the height of her career, the author of *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) and *Middlemarch* (1871 1872) was—according to her American biographer Frederick R Karl—one of the three most famous women in England (the other two being Queen Victoria and Florence Nightingale). But early in the 20th century, her books fell out of fashion Condemned as cumbersome and moralistic, they were deemed unfit to stand in the sharp, bracing atmosphere of the new modernism More recently, readers and scholars have begun to enthuse once more over Eliot's complex genius, rediscovering not only her supreme story telling abilities, but also a powerful mind engaged with problems that haunt society still Eliot herself has undergone a second look as well, as biographers pry beneath her grave public mask to uncover the tormented woman beneath No one has taken this process further than Karl, whose thorough and insightful *George Eliot, Voice of a Century* shows an author who spent much of her 61 years struggling with depression


Eliot: unconventional

Eliot also suffered from shattering headaches and a progression of undiagnosed aches and pains. She was often wracked with confusion and self-doubt as well, though she mustered determination enough to fight off her family and the strictures of a prudish, paternalistic society, both of whom disapproved of her choices in life Karl's great achievement is to demonstrate how those struggles fed her fiction, supplying its main themes and giving it a thoughtful complexity that raises Eliot into the top rank of novelists.

Eliot, whose original name was Mary Anne Evans was born in 1819 on a pleasant farm in the county of Warwickshire in central England, the youngest child of a successful estate manager, Robert Evans and his second wife, Christiana On the face of it, Eliot enjoyed a contented upbringing—a view superficially supported by her early novels, in which she romanticized the England of her childhood Karl is rightly suspicious of this rosy view, searching for hints of unhappiness in the novels and in Eliot's relationship with her father, who later became the main model for the title character of one of her best-known works, *Adam Bede*. Oddly, Karl virtually ignores Christiana, except to remark that Mary Anne's mother was strict, and that the 16 year old Eliot felt no grief at her death Such hints suggest that Christiana was a cold, ungiving mother—surely a major factor in Eliot's lifelong depression That Karl avoids this issue is puzzling, and constitutes a major flaw



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BOOKS

in his understanding of Eliot's psychology.

Karl's narrative becomes far more convincing as Eliot grows older. He paints a memorable portrait of a homely young woman (she had a large, fleshy nose and protuberant jaw) caught between her duty to look after her father and the attractions of Coventry's intellectual circles. Freed by his death in 1849, Eliot, then 29, gravitated to London, where she became close to the handsome writer and editor John Chapman, editing his important periodical, *Westminster Review*. Karl speculates that Eliot and Chapman were lovers. In any case, their relationship fit Eliot's lifelong pattern of liaisons with attractive men who were considered less bright than she.

The most important of those figures was her companion of 24 years, the writer George Henry Lewes. Since he was already married, he and Eliot were forced to live common law—a situation that brought an ocean of Victorian disapproval upon their heads. It also determined, as Karl shows, Eliot's unwavering focus in her novels on the conflict between society and individual values—an extremely complicated issue for Eliot, since she had strong feelings on both sides.

Insofar as Eliot could be happy, she was happy with Lewes. The couple apparently enjoyed a robust sex life, as well as frequent trips to Europe and the friendship of many of England's leading intellectuals. And crucially, Lewes made it possible for Eliot to write, encouraging her through her doubts and shielding her from outside criticism. Under his protective care, Eliot produced her first book of fiction in 1858, a collection of novellas called *Scenes of Clerical Life*. *Adam Bede* appeared a year later. Both books were immediately successful, setting their author on the path to fame and riches. They also set off a storm of speculation as to the author's real identity. Eliot had taken a pseudonym to avoid drawing attention to her adulterous relationship with Lewes, which could have prevented her from finding a publisher and hurt sales. But Karl sheds little light on why she chose a *male* pseudonym; perhaps the "George" pays tribute to Lewes's crucial role in her work. In any case, when the secret of her true identity finally did leak out in 1859, Eliot's career was far too advanced to be seriously damaged.

Karl's biography sometimes flags under the burden of too much detail about Eliot's daily life, and his psychological speculations remain a weak point. But on the whole, this is the kind of intellectually subtle performance that Eliot—that most intellectual of novelists, deserves. Karl's discussion of the sombre orchestration of her late novels *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda* is a particular joy, and he is utterly convincing in his portrait of Eliot—who died in 1880 of kidney failure—as a sensitive, tortured and divided woman who had the genius to turn her sufferings into literary gold.

JOHN BEMROSE

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The ego who walks like a man

BY ALLAN FOTHERINGHAM



ROY PETERSON

There are half a hundred people—mostly women—who have sat beside Pierre Berton at a banquet and have concluded, due to his silence throughout, that he is essentially a shy man.

There could be another opinion. Could you say a father named Pierre who named his children Penny, Pamela, Patsy, Peter, Paul, Peggy Anne—and an adopted daughter Perri—just possibly might have an ego?

Someone said all journalists are really shy egomaniacs. That is true, and so Berton fits comfortably into both categories.

All we know is that he is one of the more interesting Canadians this country has produced. In his new book, *My Times: Living with History 1947-1995* he lays out further evidence. He is passionate, he is bumbling, he claims, he has extraordinary energy—and he doesn't fear anything. What he hates is Canadian complacency.

The best evidence, a clever publishing device, are the inside covers of the book, reproducing newspaper headlines that demonstrate the guy's fearless manner.

"Berton Takes Pile-Driver to Canada." "Berton Calls Police Inefficient and Callous." "'Carry Me to Jail,' Berton Taunts PQ." "Women Are Discriminated Against in Media—Berton." "Bishop Blasts Berton." "Stop Hoaxing Kids on Sex'—Berton Sticks to His Guns." And on. And on.

He's now, of course, a national icon, a decade past retirement age. When he published the first half of his memoirs, *Starting Out*, he was clearly startled by the critical response. Reviewers intimated there were great figures in life, say a Churchill, whose career merited more than one volume.

Pierre Berton, they suggested, as interesting as his life obviously was, might have wrapped up his tale in one tome. Stung by the slap, he has turned out three as-usual best-selling books—*The Arctic Grail*, *The Great Depression*, *Niagara*—before returning, wounds all licked, to the second half of his tumultuous life.

One of the more interesting things about the greatest Canadian nationalist of all is that he confesses here his ambition was to make it in the United States.

When *Maclean's* plucked him from *The Vancouver Sun* in 1947 he "had no intention of remaining in Hogtown. It was merely a tedious way point on the rocky road of my ambitions." Surely within two years the editors of *Life* or *Saturday Evening Post* would notice his brilliant work "and extend a beckoning finger."

It didn't happen—to Canada's credit. The big galumph who was raised in the mythical Yukon gold-mine town of Dawson City evolved into the biggest enemy of the American smothering of Canadian interests.

His main gift is his enthusiasm—product of his small-town pioneer background—and his prodigious discipline. He details how in fact he enjoyed his hour long drive to his rural home in Kleinburg north of Toronto because he could compose in his head several of his *Toronto Star* daily columns.

Wife Janet, who long ago should have been awarded the Victoria Cross for putting up with him, grew tired of explaining to guests why their host was standing in the corner with his face a blank mask. He wasn't drunk, he was writing a column.

The Dawson City kid has indeed lived with history in the last half-century. He has covered everything. In Korea as a war correspondent, he was reviled for having his own jeep, driver, interpreter and bodyguard. He did Hiroshima, the Berlin Wall, China, Hollywood, Antarctica. In the shadow of the Sphinx, he and CBC producer Daryl Duke—waiting for an interview with Col. Nasser—end up in a belly-dancing joint that features two half-naked seven-foot Watusi. Berton asks Duke how he likes the local drink, arrack. "It's more like pop," says Duke. "It's had no effect on me." Berton: "Then why are we dancing on the table?"

He practises what he preaches. Janet for some time had been an active member of the Committee for the Adoption of Coloured Youngsters. One day they decided her actions had to suit her words. Perri came into the all white family. When a truant officer asked him to take in a troubled 16-year-old, Eric Basciano, for a couple of days, the days stretched on and—after adoption—bingo, a family of eight.

Some time before, 1963 to be exact, in this magazine Berton wrote about the hypocrisy of sex in our society and hoped his young daughters would at least be introduced to it in a bed and not the back seat of a car. The panicked management sacked him.

A committed socialist, the millionaire Berton once announced publicly that he would give his numerous children the finest education he could afford but would leave them no money, giving that to charities. (We wonder about that pledge, grandchildren being grandchildren.)

He is hated, of course, by academics because he has hijacked their monopoly: he has made history readable. Early on he was asked on television what subjects he would suggest to young writers. Berton said there are dozens of fascinating stories out there—the Dionne quintuplets, the CPR, Niagara.

Twenty years later, he gleefully recalls, they were still sitting there, untouched. Result: three more best-sellers. On Oct. 1, 1972, he had four books on the best-seller top 10. "That record has never been exceeded and, I suspect, never will be."

To quote Dizzy Dean: "It ain't bragging if you done it."

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